

La Vie Est Drôle

Posted originally on the [Archive of Our Own](http://archiveofourown.org/works/2366366) at <http://archiveofourown.org/works/2366366>.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warning:	No Archive Warnings Apply
Category:	F/F
Fandom:	Kill la Kill
Relationships:	Kiryuuin Satsuki/Matoi Ryuuko , Gamagoori Ira/Mankanshoku Mako , Jakuzure Nonon/Sanageyama Uzu
Characters:	Matoi Ryuuko , Kiryuuin Satsuki , Mankanshoku Mako , Gamagoori Ira , Jakuzure Nonon , Sanageyama Uzu , Inumuta Houka , Iori Shirou , Mikisugi Aikuro , Hououmaru Rei
Additional Tags:	Romance , Comedy , Sibling Incest , Self-Indulgent
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of Les Soeurs Ciseaux
Stats:	Published: 2014-09-27 Completed: 2022-03-22 Words: 47,765 Chapters: 25/25

La Vie Est Drôle

by [BleedingBlade](#)

Summary

Only three years after the dissolution of their mother's company, Kiryuin Satsuki and Matoi Ryuko have established themselves in careers whose demands unfortunately require them to be apart. Hilarious complications ensue when a temporary solution devised by the sisters' well-meaning friends leads to unforeseen and wide-ranging consequences.

Notes

Before you start reading this, I just want to make it absolutely clear that I wrote this sequel out of pure self-indulgence. So if you're looking for narrative progression, conflict resolution, character development and all that jazz...you might want to check out my other works instead X-D But if you're just keen on reading fluff and smut, you're totally in the right place ;-)

Mise en Scène

~~~~~MIKISUGI AIKURO~~~~~

She was, you'd concluded for the n<sup>th</sup> time in several months, really a piece of work.

No matter how many times you'd seen it in the last two years, her initial appearance on the ramp always managed to take your breath away. In an industry where stunning beauty and flawless figures were a commonplace, Kiryuin Satsuki still managed to outclass the rest.

Part of it had to do with the way she carried herself on the runway. Years of practice with the sword had given her movements an economical grace that the struts of all the other power models couldn't quite duplicate. Another part of it had to do with the way her charisma came across. Her magnetism conveyed itself through the billboard, the screen and the printed page—something about her haunting gaze and enigmatic smile inciting a curious yet wildly profitable mix of elevating reverence and ribald lust.

On top of all that, she was gracious and polite, professional and punctilious. If her fees were exorbitant, it was because the top fashion houses of the world were willing to pay for her exclusivity. But she was an investment that always handsomely returned, and so the bidding wars got slightly more ludicrous with every season that passed.

If that were all she was, it would have been enough. But she was far more than the supermodel that the world knew her to be. She was also the mastermind behind an empire that she had carved for herself from scratch, barely three years after she'd liquidated her mother's company and given virtually all the proceeds to a rival clan in Osaka.

You remembered the day she'd visited Rinne High School, deep in the suburbs of Kanagawa district. You'd assumed at the time that she'd shown up to discuss her sister's unexpected leave of absence from school. But she'd asked to see you instead, and despite yourself, you'd felt a quiver of anticipation.

She looked different from when you'd seen her last: thinner and paler (as if she'd been recently ill) but oddly also calmer...and deadlier. She hadn't wasted time on pointless chatter though and had gone straight ahead and asked:

"Mikisugi-san, would you be willing to head the paramilitary arm of a conglomerate I'm founding?"

You'd raised an eyebrow in response. "Forgive my rudeness, Satsuki-sama, but the crisis is over and you have the rest of your young life ahead. Shouldn't you be using your time to be moving on to other less...militant things?"

"I've asked myself that, Mikisugi-san, but certain...events have convinced me that some of level of continued vigilance is required."

You'd stared at her with half-lidded eyes and allowed three of your shirt buttons to come undone—a move that had always managed to unnerve the younger Kiryuin. *She* had merely raised an eyebrow though, then leaned back casually and crossed a slender leg. You'd caught a brief glimpse of an alabaster thigh and swallowed—and realized at that moment that she'd beaten you at your own game.

You took a moment to regroup then replied. “Why would I be compelled to abandon this cherished life as a homeroom teacher, Satsuki-sama? With the death of your mother, I've discharged the last of my debts to Dr. Matoi.”

"Because, Mikisugi-san, being a homeroom teacher will never give you the stage on which you can bare your body for the world to see."

You'd stared at her again, your curiosity finally and definitely piqued. “Satsuki-sama,’ you'd said gravely as you let the rest of your shirt peel away, “you really know how to persuade a man.”

And that was how you'd ended up being one of the most sought after male models of COVER Talent—your face and body exposed on innumerable ads and billboards for countless adoring fans to see.

In an irony that you'd long since learned to expect from Kiryuin Satsuki, your ubiquitous nakedness was a convenient front for your real role as the Director of COVER Operations.

“And what exactly will COVER Operations do, Satsuki-sama?” you'd asked her at that initial meeting.

She'd smiled. “It will serve as the immediate line of defense should the Life Fibers re-emerge. I would suggest you invite Tsumugu-san and the other surviving members of Nudist Beach as well.”

“But why go through the trouble of establishing a...modeling agency? Why not go purely underground instead?”

“Because I still need a way to influence the public, Mikisugi-san. And as you very well know from your cherished life as a homeroom teacher, formal education has pitifully little influence in this day and age. The days of the Honnouji Academy experiment are well and truly over. The modeling agency is just one of several strategies for creating a more diffuse yet more pervasive means of shaping and directing public thought.”

“And what will your ...role be in all this, Satsuki-sama? And Ryuko-chan's as well?”

She'd smiled. “I'm simply going to be another COVER model—just like you, Mikisugi-san. As for my sister...I don't know yet what Ryuko plans to do. While she's pledged me her support, her future remains her own.”

You'd seen her to the door and bid goodbye when she suddenly turned on her heel and said:



“By the way Mikisugi-san, I have a personal favor to ask. If you care at all for my sister, kindly forget the fact that Ryuko and I are linked together by blood.”

You’d discovered soon enough in the months that followed what the motivation was behind her request. As...unorthodox as their relationship was, it pleased you to see that Dr. Matoi’s daughters had managed to find happiness at last.

But the older one...really, that elder Kiryuin was a piece of work.

And you meant it as the highest accolade that you could possibly bestow.

With that, you stood up and allowed the zipper of your pants to come undone. It was Fashion Week in London and, just like Satsuki-sama, you had to earn your keep.

### ~~~~~INUMUTA HOUKA~~~~~

Life, you’d concluded for the n<sup>th</sup> time in several years, was certainly never boring with Kiryuin Satsuki around.

At the moment, you were in the control booth of New York’s Madison Square Garden, right before the start of the venue’s most massive concert to date. As the head of the COVER Media group, you had more than enough subordinates who could have capably covered the event, but you were there for two other reasons that just happened to coincide.

The first was the fact that Jakuzure Nonon—who tended to ignore your advice and assistance in matters where the COVER Music label was concerned—had actually requested your support in this initiative. The second was the fact that Iori Shiro needed your help in managing the vast amounts of experimental data the concert was expected to generate that night.

“COVER Music will play several roles in the conglomerate, Inumuta,” Lady Satsuki had explained when she’d outlined her intentions nearly three years ago. “Just like COVER Fashion, COVER Media and COVER Talent, it will be a means of indirectly influencing the public. And just like COVER Fashion, it will serve as a front for conducting further research on the Life Fibers themselves.”

“But why diversify into music, Satsuki-sama?” you’d asked. “There’s more than enough ground to cover with the fashion line alone.”

“Nonon’s battle with Ryuko during the Sudden Death Runoff Election established that music can be used to impair Life Fiber synchronization. A record label will be useful in continuing our investigations on the effects of sound. The fashion line will disseminate harmless amounts of the Fibers for our research, while the media group will amplify our reach.”

As always, her strategy had been brilliant in its foresight and inspired in its execution. The entire COVER conglomerate was designed to be a money-making empire (in appearance as well as fact) but the majority of its profits and its efforts were used to fund and maintain a covert global defense against the resurgence of an alien race. The name of the conglomerate itself was the capstone to the genius of the enterprise: reversing the moniker of her mother's company was irony in the highest degree.

Part of the company's success, of course, lay in your skill in identifying emerging cultural trends. "So much of genius is simply about timing, Inumuta," Lady Satsuki had said. "It's not about being the first to conceive an idea—but being the first to articulate or express the zeitgeist of the times. COVER will succeed by being the first to identify the postmodern world's many zeitgeists—long before they visibly manifest."

Not all of the company's heads relied on your data of course. Jakuzure, for one, preferred to rely exclusively on her intuition. You couldn't fault her though as her nose for the music business had been unerringly correct—if the evening's record concert sales were to serve as an indication. And, as if your thoughts had been enough to conjure her presence, the voice of the pink-haired music executive crackled in your ear.

"We're going live in three minutes, Inumuta. Do try *not* to screw this up."

"That's a fine way to talk to someone who's here to help you out," you'd drawled lazily in response.

"Oh? Is that how you want to take it? This was more for *you* than for *me*, dog. With COVER Media's unrivaled access to tonight's event, your ratings are going to soar all across the board."

"You should try joining my group, Jakuzure. That serpentine tongue of yours has an unparalleled ability to put a strange spin on facts."

"Is that a compliment coming from you?"

"Only if that's how you want to take it."

"That's enough, you two," you heard Iori's voice cut into the line. "We've got thirty seconds left before going live."

Putting all thoughts of your ongoing verbal war with Jakuzure aside, you turned your attention to the grandstand in front. You were personally controlling both the lighting and the sound that night, and as the curtains went up around the darkened hall, you directed a solitary beam of light on the center of the massive stage.

The spotlight shone on a solitary figure with its head bowed and its features hidden. The light reflected on wavy black hair—the locks dark as midnight save for a single streak of startling red. Then the figure looked up, and you zoomed a camera lens all the way in to catch the stare of a mesmerizing pair of cobalt blue eyes.

She'd smiled then, and all around you in one of the world's largest entertainment arenas, all hell practically broke loose.

Life, you corrected yourself as you watched Matoi Ryuko effortlessly command the stage, was certainly never boring with the Kiryuin *sisters* around.



*Image of Ryuko illustrated by artist Dsmile.*

# Retour en Arrière

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### ~~~~~JAKUZURE NONON~~~~~

You'd smiled in satisfaction as pandemonium broke out in the jam-packed hall around you—the evening was going to be another milestone in your short yet already stellar career. As you watched her stride across the stage in her black leather boots and signature red glove, you had to admit that she possessed a charisma of her own: something about her rebellious gaze and pouting lips inciting an odd yet wildly lucrative mix of whole-hearted adoration and unadulterated lust.

In the entire history of your interactions with the sister of your oldest friend, you'd gone through the whole gamut of human emotions: from hatred and hostility, to apathy and indifference, to respect and (yes, you'd long ago suspected it), to an affection that you couldn't quite admit.

You remembered when it all began, when you'd caught her playing a guitar in Satsuki-chan's garage. You were ready to be snarky, as you always were, except there was something genuinely...promising in what she'd played and sung.

"Not bad, delinquent—for someone who can barely finger the chords."

"Practice time went to beating other people up, snake—as I'm sure you recall."

You'd let that one slide because you'd actually exaggerated her lack of skill. The same kinesthetic genius that had made her such a formidable adversary on the battlefield showed in the way her fingers danced over the guitar.

The words that came out of your lips next surprised even you.

"Join COVER Music, Ryuko. I can turn you into a star."

What surprised you even more was the crooked grin she'd given you in response.

"Sure," she'd shrugged. "Why not?"

You'd drilled her for an entire year after that, seizing her spare time after school to take her through a crash course on music theory and delivery, focusing on vocal and instrumental performance and on musical arrangement and composition. She was as technically adept as you'd anticipated; with her Fiber-enhanced endurance, she would practice for hours until her fingers bled. What you didn't expect was her theoretical acuity—until you remembered that her father, mother and sisters were geniuses as well.

The biggest revelation of all, however, had been her voice: a sexy, smoky and full-bodied contralto with a surprisingly wide range. She was downright *sultry* when she lost herself in her music—in those moments, you *knew* that all that existed for her was the image of her sister's face.

Part of her immediate and early success had been due to her innate musical ability. But most of it had boiled down to her edgy vulnerability—the moody defiance in her look and stance contradicted by the raw tenderness that came across in the songs she wrote.

She'd had to pay a price for her success of course. As the months passed, as her songs climbed the charts, as the demand for her concerts grew, she saw Satsuki less and less. Satsuki-chan herself was immersed in the demands of her modeling career, and as time passed, it became a logistical nightmare making both sisters' schedules intersect. Part of you commiserated—even you rarely saw Sanageyama most days—but part of you was all too ready to capitalize on Ryuko's constant longing for Satsuki.

For lack of a better word, there was so much...*artistry* in her yearning. It brought even more depth to her songwriting and even more texture to her singing, the raw emotion coming through in every single word and note. In short, her melancholy drove her audiences *wild*—and propelled the stock of COVER Music through the roof.

"You're not deliberately keeping them apart, are you?" your boyfriend had asked on one of the increasingly rare evenings that you managed to be together.

"Of course I am," you'd calmly replied. "Though not exactly for the reasons you think." He'd raised an eyebrow at you then. "They're just starting their careers," you'd sighed. "We don't want to dampen their appeal by telling the world that they're in a same-sex relationship."

"C'mon, Nonon," he'd scoffed. "We don't live in *that* kind of a world anymore."

"Yes, we do," you'd firmly rebutted. "It takes a snake to know all other kinds of snake. It doesn't have to be like this forever—"

"—just the first decade or so, I suppose," he'd interrupted.

You'd shrugged your shoulders then. "We'll wait that long if that's how long it takes."

"That tongue of yours is as sharp as always," he'd said as he leaned back into the pillows.

You'd smiled slyly at him then. "Let's put it to good use then, shall we?"

You didn't hear him complain for the rest of that night.

People always spoke about what an underachiever you were, but you'd stopped accepting that as a fact the day Satsuki-sama told you that she needed your help.

It made you ridiculously happy, of course, because even if she'd terrified you a good tenth of your life and given at least half-a-dozen commands that authorized your outright execution, you'd never—not even once—hated Satsuki-sama. You'd always thought that she was beautiful and intelligent and strong, and when she'd asked you to be the head of COVER Talent, it occurred to you that perhaps you were beautiful and intelligent and strong as well.

You remembered the looks on Mikisugi-senpai's and Sanageyama-senpai's faces then. "She's going to be our *manager*?" The two men had turned to Satsuki-sama in disbelief.

"Yes," Satsuki-sama had smiled tranquilly and replied. "Mankanshoku-san has an unrivaled ability to bring out the best in people I would say."

That was nearly three years ago, and with the combined assistance of your innate perseverance, your mother's mystery croquettes and Gamagori-senpai's frequent interventions, COVER Talent had become one of the world's top modeling agencies despite the many eccentricities of its employees.

For instance, Mikisugi-senpai had a tendency to disrobe himself when left unattended and Sanageyama-senpai was almost as bad. You often had to attend the shoots of both of your top male talents just to ensure that the clothes they were modeling actually managed to stay on.

Satsuki-sama, on the other hand, was almost impossible to undress. The entire fashion industry knew it as the famous Kiryuin injunction: she was the only power model who refused to bare her breasts, expose her buttocks or do intimate shoots with other models involved. You'd been afraid in the beginning that it would end her career before it had even begun, but the sheer force of her beauty and her charisma meant that whatever she modeled simply *sold*. At some point, her distinctive lack of nudity constituted the very essence of her allure.

You knew, of course, that Ryuko-chan was behind it—Satsuki-sama tended to bring out possessiveness in your best friend that you'd never seen before. (When she'd caught Mikisugi-senpai trying to make the moves on her sister, she'd glared at him and growled: "Try that again, Mikisugi, and I'll nail your rainbow-colored balls where they can glow for the entire world to see.")

Earlier that day, you'd caught Satsuki-sama with a preoccupied look on her face, and you'd known right away that she'd been thinking about her sister (Ryuko-chan's Madison Square Garden concert had started and ended while she'd been working on the ramp). She'd changed to the all-white clothing she favored between shoots, the snow-colored scabbard of Ikigai dangling from her waist. Even without makeup, she was utterly and devastatingly beautiful, and it didn't surprise you in the least that *she* was the most successful model in the world, consistently outperforming every other model in the field.

"She'll be home in two days, Satsuki-sama," you'd told her consolingly, and it was a sign of the mutual regard you now held for each other that you'd managed to grow so bold.



She'd smiled at you, not bothering to deny the implications of what you'd said. "Thank you, Mankanshoku-san. These last three weeks have been rather...long."

Later on, Gamagori-senpai had asked, "Is there really nothing that you can do?" The fact that even *he* was concerned meant that you had to take action at this point.

"Because it's you, Gamagori-senpai, Mankanshoku Mako will find a way!"

The problem, of course, lay in convincing Jakuzure-senpai.



[Image](#) of Mako, Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist [Morito Yamataka](#).

## Chapter End Notes

I'm far from the first writer to envision Ryuko as a rock star, but in this particular world I'm creating, Ryuko is a specific kind of rock star. My favorite peg for her is Georgian-British singer-songwriter [Katie Melua](#). For those of you who've never heard of this gorgeous and extremely talented musician, I suggest that you look her up in YouTube focusing on her live performance at *AVO Session Basel*. In particular, look up the songs *Nine Million Bicycles* (my idea of what Ryuko would sound like singing something sweet), *Scary Films* (my idea of sexy), and *Closest Thing to Crazy* (my idea of soulful).

Just the thought of Ryuko singing something like these to Satsuki makes my hairs stand on end.



# Arrêt sur Image

~~~~~MATOI RYUKO~~~~~

You'd felt more exhausted than you had in weeks. While performing live was always an incredible and intoxicating thrill, this had been your longest tour to date—and the longest time *she* and you had been apart.

Despite your physical separation, you saw her literally everyday: her image plastered on countless ads and billboards for the entire world to see. Seeing her face always made you pause (made your chest and throat constrict with an all-too familiar twinge). You knew her aristocratic features by heart; you'd traced their lines countless times on countless nights with reverential fingers and ravenous lips. You'd seen those mesmerizing eyes darkened by desire, those luscious lips moistened by dew, those delicate collar bones beaded by sweat, those slender wrists pinned beneath your hands, and that raven black hair fanned lustrously across snow white sheets...

The time you'd spent together—just you and her both—had been far too brief. Not long after she'd brought the Elite Four together once again, circumstances had begun to drive you apart. She'd established COVER and begun her modeling career; Jakuzure had “discovered” you and launched your musical career. Life had rapidly devolved to school and music and rehearsals and gigs—with precious little time left over for what mattered to you most.

What saved you both in those early days was the endurance granted by your extraterrestrial genes. Both of you worked hard during the day—and made love ferociously at night. Your sister made love the same way she wielded a sword: with unimaginable power and exquisite skill, and her mastery in bed meant that she often had to cover your mouth to stifle your scandalously vociferous cries.

Those were the days of rabid experimentation. You fucked each other in every conceivable way, on every manageable surface. You still remembered the night she'd strapped a dildo to her waist, and the memory of her pounding into you, your ankles locked behind her waist, the bed creaking with the force of her thrusts was still enough to make you wet. She'd ridden you so hard that night that you'd almost passed out; only the sweetness of her kisses had kept you from surrendering to sleep.

You'd returned the favor the following evening by tying her wrists to the bedpost and taking her from behind. The weight of her breasts in your hands and the sound of her moans alternating with the slap of flesh against flesh had been enough to make you come. The rest of the world knew her as an elegant and ethereal beauty—only you knew how feral she could get.

Of all the ways you made love, you enjoyed going down on her the most. You liked reveling in her scent and in her taste, the sounds of her pleasure filtering down into the private world you inhabited between her legs, one hand caressing her breasts while the other hand plumbed

her very depths. One of your favorite positions was to lie on your back and have her sit on your face, one hand holding a pale thigh in place, as you timed the upward thrusts of your fingers and tongue with the rhythmic descent of her slender hips. She'd grip the headboard so tight during those times, your name a breathless sob on her lips, that you often feared that the wood would break.

But it wasn't just the sex (though the sex alone was mind-blowing); it was how she held you after you made love. You missed the feel of her skin, the scent of her hair, the sound of her voice, the look in her mesmerizing eyes the same blue shade as yours. You *missed* her—and the force of the longing was enough to nearly drive you mad.

It came out in the songs of course—every single one of them dedicated to the woman who was mother and sister, friend and lover, comrade and muse. Few people (if any at all apart from Jakuzure) noticed it, but all your songs were addressed to a gender-less *you*. Millions of adoring fans paid to hear every word you sang and every note you played, but when you sang and when you played, you did it all for her and for her alone.

Now your longest—and most successful—tour was over, and despite the fact that you hadn't slept much in days, you'd insisted on taking the first long haul flight back to Japan. Now, even if for just one night, you could bury yourself in her arms, and forget who you'd become, and forget who she'd become, and forget the grasping and greedy world that wanted each of you to itself.

Now, for the first time in three weeks, you could actually come home.

~~~~~KIRYUIN SATSUKI~~~~~

She'd stood framed in the doorway as you'd turned around.

She was dressed all in black, as she normally was, the black- and red-bladed swords you'd given her for her 18th birthday dangling from her waist. The sight of her face and the smile on her lips were almost more than you could bear. "*Okaeri...*" you'd whispered, your voice faint from the massive yet entirely understandable constriction in your throat and chest.

She'd practically slammed you against the wall in response, kissing you everywhere her ravenous lips could reach. She'd cast your clothing rapidly aside and, despite her more diminutive frame, had borne you easily to the living room couch. She'd kissed you deeply before moving her lips down to the flat planes of your belly, her hands curving possessively over the swells of your breasts. Then she'd wrapped your knees around her neck and buried her face between your legs, and even if she'd just touched you for all of three minutes, you were already dripping wet.

"*Ryuko,*" you'd moaned as you bucked your hips against her face, your ankles locked behind her back. She reached a hand up to palm your breasts and used her other hand to fuck you senseless while her tongue lapped up the juices that leaked between your legs.

Your hands fisted into her hair as you spasmed violently, her name a ragged sob on your dewy lips. She held you close as the tremors stopped, and it was only then that she replied: “*Tadaima*, Satsuki...”

You’d closed your eyes as you heard the long-missed greeting; it seemed you heard it less and less these days. Then you’d opened your eyes and kissed her hand before holding it to your cheek.

“I’ve missed you,” you’d said softly, without a trace of rancor in your voice.

“I’m sorry...” she’d replied, half miserably, and you felt that all-too familiar twinge in your chest and throat.

“Don’t be sorry,” you’d told her, smiling. “You’ve found something that you want to do—and what you want to do is a beautiful thing.”

Both of you had lain quiet for a while, reveling in the sight, scent and feel of the other’s flesh. Then she’d spoken again.

“The World Music Awards are coming up...” You’d known exactly why she’d brought it up.

You’d looked at her gently. “You can ask Mankanshoku to go with you. You know how she never gets tired of that sort of thing.”

She’d sighed, her disappointment and understanding equally clear. “Half the world now thinks that I’m going out with Mako.”

You’d laughed. “Well, the other half thinks I’m going out with Mikisugi or Sanageyama; or possibly even with both.”

“When you put it that way,” she’d said wryly, “I feel so much better off.” Then her expression had darkened. “Has Mikisugi tried putting the moves on you again?”

“When he tries, I casually mention your name. I have to admit he moves surprisingly fast.”

“He’d better move faster if I catch him at it,” she’d muttered, and at that point you’d sat up and straddled her waist. “As illogical and irrational as your jealousy is, Ryuko, I find it...sexy as hell.”

She’d reached her hands up and begun fondling your breasts. “Why don’t you show me just how *sexy* you find me, Satsuki?”

The invitation was all you needed to hear, and you spent the rest of that night fucking her to the point of insensibility. The next morning, while she’d lain asleep in bed, you’d struggled an entire minute with the temptation to curl up next to her and hold her close. She’d clung to you while you’d slept, and the look of innocence on her face as she’d lain in your sheets had made your chest ache with the all-too constant twinge of tenderness and desire.

You loved her (like you’d never loved anything else). And you missed her (like you’d never missed anything else). And the sound of her voice when her songs were played never failed

to make your hairs stand on end. It was a voice that haunted you when you were asleep and awake, and even if the grasping and greedy world fancied her as its own, you *knew* that she sang and played for you alone.

But you were a supermodel after all—the best in the world—with a reputation for grace and courtesy and a professionalism that was unmatched. With a sigh, you’d stood up and got dressed, your bags already packed and waiting by the side of the door.

Fashion Week in Milan awaited, and even the mastermind behind an empire had to earn her keep.





Image of Ryuko and Satsuki illustrated by artist CuteSexyRobutts.

Facteur de Surprise

~~~~~JAKUZURE NONON~~~~~

You'd known what she wanted to talk about the moment you got the call.

"Jakuzure-senpai, we need to talk."

You'd sighed. Gamagori had probably put her up to this. The giant's loyalty to Satsuki-chan knew no bounds—including the ones that bordered her private life. "Why don't we discuss this in Milan, Mankanshoku?" you'd suggested. "I'm on break and Sanageyama's been bugging me to hit the road with him for months now anyway."

While your significant other, Mikisugi-san and Satsuki-chan strutted the runways blocks away, you and Mankanshoku sat sipping espressos at the Caffè Cova, watching tourists gawk at the impossibly priced displays of the Quadrilatero d'Oro.

"We *both* agreed to this, Mankanshoku. You and I know that their careers, at this stage, won't be able to take that kind of publicity."

"We're not putting them on reality television, Jakuzure-senpai," Mankanshoku had replied in a laudably conciliatory tone. "We're just trying to help them find some time together."

"Mankanshoku, although the fashion and music worlds often agreeably collide, they do run by separate timetables. Logistical challenges aside, the media's scrutiny is getting more and more intense the more popular Satsuki-chan and Ryuko-san both get."

"I know, Jakuzure-senpai, and that's why I've been thinking about this for some time..." Mankanshoku spoke slowly. "If I understood her properly, you've been trying to get Ryuko-chan to shoot more...raunchy music videos correct?"

You'd grown red in the face. "Is that what that ungrateful delinquent called it??? I'm just asking her to shoot a kissing scene or two!"

"But Jakuzure-senpai, you do recall that it's also because of Satsuki-sama right?"

You'd stiffened for a moment, then slumped your shoulders in defeat. "Yes," you'd muttered, "I do recall."

As if you could possibly forget. You'd been hounding Ryuko for weeks to shoot something more risqué than the unplugged-style videos she normally did. "I don't want to," she'd insisted, "and even if I did, I don't think Satsuki would like it."

You'd snorted back in disbelief. "Just because you won't let her bare her skin doesn't mean Satsuki-chan would insist on the same petty prohibitions, Matoi." Determined to prove your

point, you'd asked Satsuki-chan at the next COVER meeting: "You wouldn't mind if Ryuko shot intimate scenes with men for her music videos, would you?"

Your oldest friend had paused then, and the dark look that had flitted across her face in that moment had made *all* of you lean back. In a voice devoid of all expression, she'd simply replied. "I would mind, Nonon," before turning to the next item on her list.

"They're really cut from the same cloth!" you'd complained to Sanageyama later that day. Your boyfriend had only shrugged. "Stitched out of the same Fibers, more like." Catching your foul look, he'd gone on to add: "Matoi's always brought out the illogical and irrational in Satsuki-sama—and that's not such a bad thing."

"What if..." Mankanshoku continued, bringing your thoughts back to the present day. "What if Ryuko-chan did those kissing scenes with Satsuki-sama? I don't think either of them would mind if that were to be the case."

You'd stared at her, unsure—all over again—if Satsuki-chan had made the right choice in appointing this croquette-powered underachiever as the head of COVER Talent.

"And how exactly," you'd asked her very slowly, "is that supposed to make things better as opposed to making them ridiculously *worse*?"

"I meant doing those scenes with Satsuki-sama dressed up as a *man*, Jakuzure-senpai."

You were about to protest out of habit when the gears in your mind ground to a halt. A vision of your oldest friend in male clothes floated slowly through your brain.

You'd immediately blanched.

"Mankanshoku," you'd said, speaking very slowly once again, "for an underachiever, you blow my mind sometimes."

"You're welcome, Jakuzure-senpai."

## ~~~~~MANKANSHOKU MAKO~~~~~

Two hours later, both of you had stared stunned. You'd managed to find a black turtleneck, a black blazer, a pair of black fitted trousers and a pair of Oxford wingtips and then used a matching Panama hat to gather up her hair.

Satsuki-sama in men's clothes was...indescribable in its effect.

"Oh. My. God." Jakuzure-senpai had said slack-jawed. "I just might have been a gay man in a previous life."

“We could *seriously* get the *yaoi* demographic,” you’d said, feeling a surge of avarice you hadn’t felt since your Fight Club President days. “If we can put her on the same billboard with Mikisugi-senpai and Sanageyama-senpai—with *both* of them half- or even nearly naked!—I’ll meet my annual targets in just one quarter alone.”

“Don’t drag my boyfriend or your quotas into this, Mankanshoku,” Jakuzure-senpai had said crossly. “And can we please stay on point? This was about helping Matoi and Satsuki-chan remember?”

That was when the vision in black across the room spoke. “While I’m touched that the both of you wish to assist me and Ryuko, perhaps one of you could explain at this point what exactly this is all about?”

### ~~~~~SANAGEYAMA UZU~~~~~

You’d never been the jealous type, but you felt a flash of something that felt very much like hostility when you saw your girlfriend holding the arm of an exceptionally beautiful man.

Beautiful men were a commonplace in your line of work, but it hadn’t concerned you (not even once) because apart from Mikisugi, your face and body easily outclassed the rest.

But the aristocratic youth whose arm was twined with Nonon’s could put even Mikisugi at his rainbow-glowing best to shame. Then you noticed the creature dangling from the princeling’s other arm—and did a double take when you recognized the star-struck visage of your manager.

“Mankanshoku-san...?” you’d said out loud in your bewilderment, and that was when your girlfriend saw you and waved you over.

“Uzu!” As you approached her and the princely intruder, you wondered why the mesmerizing blue eyes seemed so oddly familiar. “Allow me to introduce you to...Soichiro-san.”

You’d only raised a glowering eyebrow at the man, who bore your antagonism with irritating grace. “A pleasure to finally meet you, Sanageyama-san. Jakuzure-san speaks very highly of you.”

Sensing the aggression that was emanating from you in waves, Mankanshoku had butted in. “Soichiro-kun is one of our newest models, Sanageyama-senpai. I hope you’ll treat him well.”

The stranger had bowed to you and said: “*Douzo yoroshiku onegaishimasu.*”

At the moment when you would have said something entirely rude but extremely satisfying, a familiar voice rumbled to your left: “Satsuki-sama, your car is ready.”



You'd turned around and looked at Gamagori in confusion. "Satsuki-sama isn't here, Gamagori—" That was when Mankanshoku had interrupted you with a wail.

"You didn't have to bust our cover, Gamagori-senpai! And just when we had Sanageyama-senpai too!"

Nonon had stared at the giant with a frown. "How did you know it was her, Gamagori? No one else we tried this disguise on today realized it was her at all."

Gamagori had looked at your girlfriend with an expression of horrified indignation. "How can I be Satsuki-sama's Invincible Shield if I allow mere appearances to conceal her radiant presence from the constant vigil of my eyes?"

You'd looked at all of them with increasing consternation—and it was only when you saw the mischief in the cobalt blue eyes that recognition finally struck.

"Satsuki-sama...?" you'd gaped.

The vision in black had laughed merrily. "It seems I can still sneak up on you, Sanageyama, despite your Shingantsu." Turning to your girlfriend, Satsuki-sama had said, "The disguise is foolproof enough for your purposes, Nonon. It's just that there's no fooling Gamagori here." Then tipping her hat in your direction with a cheery wink and a jaunty wave, she'd left you all to head back to her hotel.

Nonon and Mankanshoku had stared at her retreating figure with dreamy eyes.

Mankanshoku had sighed first. "If Ryuko-chan weren't my best friend..."

Then your girlfriend had sighed. "If Satsuki-chan weren't *my* best friend..."

"Oi, you two, we can hear you, you know," you'd muttered in annoyance before turning to Gamagori for help. The giant's jaw was working furiously—an internal battle of epic proportions playing itself out in the contortions of his face. "Oi," you glared at him. "What's up with you, Gamagori? We're about to lose our women to Satsuki-sama!"

In a voice choking with repressed emotion, Gamagori had replied. "If...if...if Satsuki-sama decides that she desires Mankanshoku for herself, then I, Gamagori Ira, as her Invincible Shield, will concede even if it breaks my heart..."

"What the hell???" you'd practically screamed. "Don't go around turning our girlfriends into a harem without my consent!"

Behind your back, you heard Mankanshoku quietly address your girlfriend. "A harem doesn't sound so bad, does it, Jakuzure-senpai?"

"Not at all, Mankanshoku," you heard your girlfriend reply after a thoughtful pause, "I gather those Fibers give her stamina enough."

You'd slapped your hand against your forehead and groaned. This was so *not* the romantic Italian vacation you'd envisioned long ago.



*Image of Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist Emuro Gemini.*

# Entrer en Scène

❧-----ARIANNE RENARDE-----❧

She looked like she'd already been seated at the table for half an hour by the time you slid into your seat. If there was one thing you appreciated about the head of COVER Music, it was the courtesy she extended by being always on the dot.

Not that you ever bothered to return the favor. You liked the entitlements that came with fame—fashionably late entrances being one of them.

“I have to admit I was surprised when I got your call,” you told her by way of greeting, slipping your sunglasses off your face.

“And I have to admit I was surprised when you actually returned it,” she'd replied without batting an eyelash. If there was another thing you appreciated about Jakuzure Nonon, it was her refusal to be intimidated by those who enjoyed the entitlements of fame.

“I was curious about what could have made your charge change her mind. She seemed rather emphatic the last time we met.”

Your last statement wasn't completely true. It wasn't idle curiosity that had brought you to the meeting as much as unbridled lust. From the moment you'd laid eyes on Matoi Ryuko, you'd been determined to take the up-and-coming musician to your bed.

You remembered the first time you'd seen her two years before: it had been at her live performance as the MTV Video Music Awards' *Artist to Watch*. She'd been a complete unknown who'd taken the world by storm, and as she'd walked across the stage, her diminutive Japanese frame had belied the sheer magnitude of the presence she evoked. Black leather pants hugged slim and narrow hips while wavy black hair concealed most of a delicate and angular face. When she'd finally lifted her face up to the lights, you'd almost gasped in surprise. You hadn't expected the owner of that full-bodied voice to be so young—and you certainly hadn't expected her to be so beautiful. Mesmerizing blue eyes had looked out intently at the rapt and admiring audience, and the “Good evening” she'd said quietly in greeting had been met by howls of fervent applause.

You'd had your staff check her background immediately after that. Searches revealed little apart from the fact that she was an orphan and apparently a troublemaker in her younger years. Her late father had had her schooled in the piano in her early tweens—likely an attempt to keep her misbehavior in check—and teachers had lauded her natural precision and dexterity while lamenting the waywardness that made it difficult for her to progress. She'd dropped the keyboard lessons as her delinquency had escalated, though it was apparently gang culture that had introduced her to the guitar and drums.

That appeared to have been the full extent of her musical training until her last year of high school when Jakuzure Nonon had taken her under her wing. Music seemed to have given her a new and exclusive outlet for her energies—there was nothing indicating a relationship of any kind and few hobbies apart from a keen interest in the martial arts. Interviews with fellow musicians showed her to be a bit of recluse, given to practicing for hours with almost superhuman endurance and strength.

The absence of any romantic relationships intrigued you the most, because you wondered how an innocent could write and sing so compellingly about love and lust. On the other hand, musicians tended to collaborate these days, and it was entirely possible that Jakuzure not only produced her music but also helped her write and arrange her songs.

As if on cue, the pink-haired music executive interrupted your thoughts.

“Ryuko hasn’t changed her mind just yet.”

You’d raised an eyebrow at the woman across the table. “While I find your audacity refreshing, Jakuzure-san, I hope you realize that you’re on the verge of overstepping your bounds. I don’t take unproductive uses of my time so lightly.”

Jakuzure had simply smiled. “We’ve found someone whom she won’t be able to refuse.”

You’d raised your other eyebrow. “Not to blow my own horn as the Americans say, Jakuzure-san, but I can’t imagine someone succeeding where I actually failed.”

The music producer had only smiled enigmatically. “No offense meant, Renarde-san, but reality can occasionally surpass our imagination.” Then her eyes had lit up as she’d spotted someone across the room. “Ah, impeccable timing as always; here he comes.”

You’d looked up as a tall and slender silhouette approached your table. Despite yourself, you were startled when the figure drew close.

What you beheld was a face of unusual and arresting beauty. The delicately chiseled features spoke of Asian ancestry, but the startling blue eyes also revealed Caucasian descent. You felt a vertiginous rush as you gazed into the lash-fringed sapphire depths.

Jakuzure made the introductions. “Renarde-san, this is Mikisugi Soichiro, the talent with whom we’d like Ryuko-san to work. Soichiro-kun, this is the renowned director Arianne Renarde.”

You actually shuddered when the creature bent down and pressed the back of your hand to its lips.

“*Enchanté*, Madame Renarde...” he murmured, something about the lower register of his voice igniting a distinctly pleasurable warmth between your legs.

“*Vous parlez français?*” you’d asked out of distracted politeness.

“*Oui, mais...pas aussi souvent que je voudrais,*” he’d replied in perfect Parisian French.

It had been a long, *long* while since you'd found a man so wildly attractive.

Then the creature's phone had rung and he'd looked apologetically at you both. "I'm afraid Mankanshoku-san needs me urgently, Jakuzure-san." Then nodding and smiling his goodbye, he'd threaded his way through the tables under the mesmerized gaze of nearly all the female patrons in the café.

Jakuzure had smiled knowingly at you, and you'd said as casually as you could. "He's enchanting, I admit, but I always thought that Ryuko-chan...swung the other way."

The pink-haired executive stared at you shrewdly. "I always thought the exact same thing about *you*, Arianne-san. But reality can often contradict our speculations, I would say."

So she'd caught your reaction to the youth after all. "Touché, Jakuzure-san. But if your Soichiro doesn't do the trick, I'll require a date with Ryuko—and possibly with Soichiro—as recompense."

"Understood, Renarde-san. And to up the ante, COVER Music will even pay the tab."

You'd nodded your agreement and slipped your sunglasses back on.

Life was certainly *far* more interesting when you had two quarries instead of just one.

## ~~~~~JAKUZURE NONON~~~~~

You'd leaned back with a sigh of relief—you hadn't been sure if your gambit would actually work.

It was a testament to Ryuko's charms that the French Fox (as she was widely known) had actually come. The woman was a legend in the industry: a multi-award-winning film maker whose works were suffused with an eroticism that only the French seemed able to conjure. In recent years she'd turned to directing music videos almost exclusively, and her collaboration with an artist was often seen by pundits as a barometer of a musician's success. To date, every standout female artist of the past decade had worked with her one way or another—and were rumored to have ended up in her bed one way or another.

Not that you blamed any of Arianne-san's conquests. Not only was the femme fatale an enchantress behind the camera and a siren underneath the sheets—she was also a strikingly beautiful woman with flaming red hair and emerald green eyes. When you actually received the call from her agent some two years before, part of you had crowed in triumph while the other part had slumped in defeat. You'd known without having to ask that Ryuko would decline her invitation: she simply didn't do *those* kinds of videos (and she would have been aghast to discover what kinds of intimate activities were expected after they were shot).

So to your undying professional regret, you'd stood by the sidelines when Ryuko had (to her credit) *politely* turned the film maker down. Then when Mankanshoku had conceived the

startlingly brilliant idea of disguising Satsuki-chan as a man, it had occurred to you that it was a deception that could undo your one professional mistake and benefit *everyone* across the board...

“Everyone, Nonon?” your boyfriend had asked, still miffed from the events of the previous afternoon.

“Don’t be like that, Uzu,” you’d said without a shade of pity. “I would have thought you’d be used to losing to Satsuki-chan by now.” Then seeing that he’d been too genuinely sullen to reply, you’d wrapped your arms around his waist and pressed your face into his back.

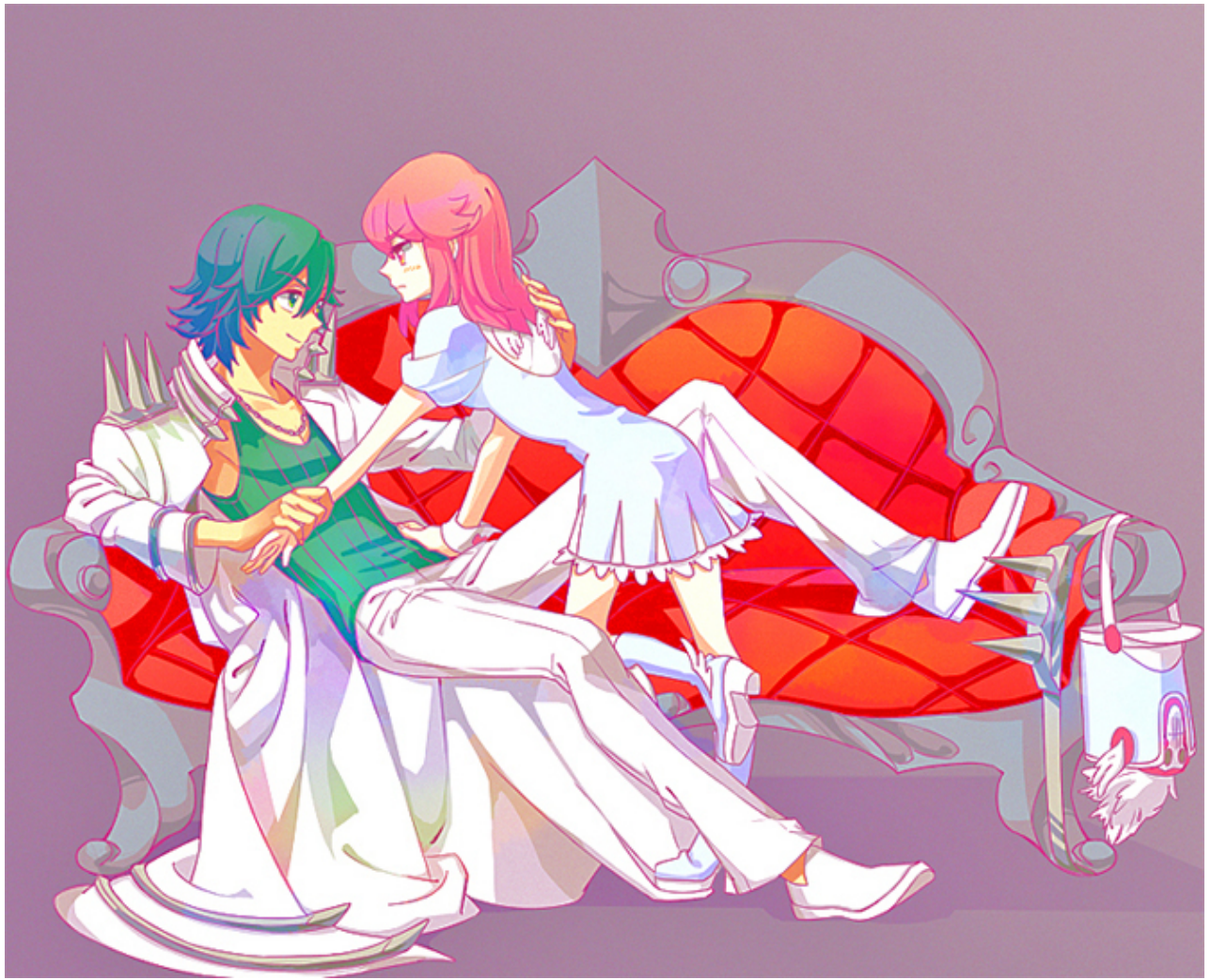
“You know that I wouldn’t be with you if I really wanted to be with her.” He’d stayed silent for a moment, then turned around and pulled you close. “Hey, Nonon,” he’d said in a voice of uncharacteristic gravity, “once you’ve had your fun with this hare brained scheme, why don’t we go off somewhere for a holiday, just you and me?”

You’d smiled with uncharacteristic sweetness and pulled him down for a kiss. “You’ve got a deal. For now though, why don’t we...monkey around with that blindfold of yours and see what...spots you can hit with just your Shingantsu?”

He’d smiled at you then with glittering eyes. “The things that roll off that tongue of yours...”

“I can think of a number,” you’d murmured before he picked you up and carried you to bed.

You didn’t manage to do much thinking for the rest of that night.



*Image of Uzu and Nonon illustrated by artist Mofuge.*

# Ménage à Trois

~~~~~MATOI RYUKO~~~~~

Weeks had passed since your world tour had ended and you'd been spending most of your time at the COVER Music studio working on your next album release. Your sister was on her way home from Paris—the last of the world's major fashion weeks finally concluded. Although it would only be a brief respite, you looked forward to the time you could spend together; there seemed to be depressingly less and less of it these days.

A commotion outside the studio drew your attention, then you saw Jakuzure walk in with a red-haired woman you'd met some two years before.

"Ryuko, you remember Arianne Renarde-san, don't you?"

You'd nodded and held your hand out to the woman in greeting. "Of course. It's a pleasure to see you again, Renarde-san, though I'm not sure what business brought you to the studio today."

"Business alone never brings me anywhere, Ryuko-chan; the prospect of business *and* pleasure, however, is enough to make me...come." Three years of living with Satsuki had sensitized you to sexual innuendos of every kind, and even if the film maker's words had failed to register, it was impossible to mistake the intentions in the verdant eyes. You felt the blush assaulting your cheeks when your manager had uncharacteristically intervened.

"Ryuko, I know we haven't discussed this in a while, but I really think we should reconsider Renarde-san's offer."

You'd shaken your head in exasperation, trying your best not to let your annoyance show. "You know what my reasons for refusing are, Nonon, and the reasons haven't cha—"

You were interrupted when a figure suddenly slammed the studio door open, paused to look around the room—then catapulted itself straight into your arms. "Ryuko-chaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaan!" the figure wailed as you crumpled into the floor. "I haven't seen you in aaaaaaaaaaaaaages!"

"What are you doing here, Mako?" you'd asked bewildered, rubbing the spots on your temple against which her elbows and fists had ricocheted.

"I'm here to bring Soichiro-kun, of course," your best friend had answered before unceremoniously evacuating your lap. "Jakuzure-senpai told me he was needed today."

"Soichiro *who*?" you'd muttered as you'd stood up and brushed the seat of your pants off.

“Mikisugi Soichiro,” a husky voice had replied—something about its lower registers igniting a distinctly *familiar* warmth between your legs.

You’d straightened and looked up very slowly—and promptly felt your heart drop to the vicinity of your boots.

You’d recognize those piercing and mesmerizing eyes anywhere (those eyes the same blue shade as yours with irises as distinctly shaped as yours). At the moment, they looked at you with a charming innocence that you knew far too well.

She was dressed like a *man*, and the effect was simply and utterly...devastating. She looked handsomer than any prince you’d seen (and you’d actually met quite a few). You wondered if the vertiginous rush you suddenly felt came from Mako’s concussive assault or from your sister’s sapphire gaze.

She tilted her head by way of greeting. “It’s an honor to finally meet you, Matoi Ryuko-san. I’m an ardent admirer of your work.”

You saw Jakuzure’s smirk out of the corner of your eye, and that single glimpse allowed several things to snap quickly into place.

In a voice of saccharine sweetness, your manager had simpered at you.

“We know your reasons haven’t changed, Ryuko, and that’s *exactly* why Mankanshoku-san and I have taken them into account...”

She had you and she knew it, and apparently even Mako was involved. They knew you wouldn’t—and couldn’t—resist your sister, professional or personal principles be damned.

As for Satsuki...well, three years of living with your sister had accustomed you to the streak of mischief that tended to surface at the most illogical and irrational times.

Life, you’d concluded for the nth time as you felt a massive headache coming on, was certainly never boring with your sister around.

~~~~~KIRYUIN SATSUKI~~~~~

The look on her face had been utterly and completely priceless.

When she’d finally managed to find her voice, she’d politely asked to have a word. Then as soon as the door had closed behind you both, she’d turned on you with a furious glare.

“What on earth were you *thinking*???” she’d hissed.

She was incredibly beautiful when she was upset. She’d gone on to rant about a few other things, but all you could think about was the moisture on her lips.

Without thinking too much about it, you'd reached for her and covered her mouth with yours, and as you'd predicted, her struggles subsided quickly enough.

"Honestly, Satsuki," she'd looked up at you after with reprimanding eyes. "Why?"

You'd looked at her for a long and thoughtful pause. Three years of living with your sister had not quite inured you to the strain of pragmatism she tended to exhibit at the most inappropriate and inconvenient times. "Because I'm in love with you, Ryuko," you'd replied simply. "And it makes me liable to do illogical and irrational things."

Her face had softened then and she'd tiptoed and pressed her lips to yours. You felt the world drop away as it always did; three years later and she could still arouse you with just a look, a smile, a kiss or a caress. "That's the *sweetest* thing anyone's ever told me," she'd told you softly after she'd broken off the kiss. "Still," she sighed, "a word of warning would have been nice."

You'd leaned back and looked down at her. "Do I really look that...strange?" She'd paused then, looking completely taken aback, then vigorously shaken her head. "God no, *not* strange—just incredibly sexy, and beautiful, and handsome, and gorgeous, all at the same time—"

You'd cut her off by kissing her again.

"I'm sorry," you'd murmured, not feeling sorry at all when you both came up for air. "I've really just missed you these last several months."

"If you're going to keep assaulting me like this," she'd replied, leaning her head against your chest, "I don't know how we're going to get away with this at all."

You'd grinned rakishly. "Don't worry. No one's going to catch me. I'm Kiryuin Satsuki after all."

"I really used to hate that about you, you know?"

"Hate what?"

"That imperious self-assurance of yours."

"Now you don't hate it?"

"Now...I just find it sexy as hell."

"What else do you find sexy now?" you'd murmured in tones an octave lower as you slowly backed her against the wall.

"That *voice*..." she'd protested weakly, as your fingers encircled her waist. "You know I can't resist *that* voice..." Then shaking her head forcefully, she'd pulled herself together and pressed her hands against your chest. "Seriously, Satsuki, how are we possibly going to pretend that we don't know each other at all?"

You'd looked at her with a smile playing on your lips. "Think of it as a game, Ryuko. I've heard that role playing makes things even more...*interesting* in bed..."

She'd looked at you with her eyebrows raised. "If things get even *more* interesting in our bed, I'm going to need more than Fibers to stay alive. And please don't tell me I should try to keep up with my elders, Satsuki."

You'd paused for a bit, then tucked an errant lock behind her ear. "Look at it this way: if we carry on with Mankanshoku's and Nonon's plan, we can see each other day *and* night—almost like it used to be."

You actually saw the gears turn in her head as she reconsidered your proposal. "You know... you really know how to persuade a girl... Soichiro-san," she'd replied with uncharacteristic coyness before twining her arms around your neck.

You were suddenly grateful for the presence of mind that had you lock the door.

~~~~~MANKANSHOKU MAKO~~~~~

"That went rather well, don't you think, Jakuzure-senpai?"

"I'll admit I was apprehensive, Mankanshoku. But now that Ryuko's agreed to everything, I can safely say the worst is done."

"Excellent," you'd replied, then promptly handed your pink-haired senior a sheaf of papers. "Now I just need you to sign this contract detailing the terms and conditions of Soichiro-kun's engagement."

The music executive quickly scanned the document—then yelled loudly enough to cause a ringing in your skull.

"Are you insane???" Then dropping her voice to a furious whisper, she'd asked, "Why the *hell* am I paying for Soichiro with Satsuki-chan's rates???"

"Business is all about opportunity costs, Jakuzure-senpai," you'd replied placidly. "Even if you're not actually getting the personality of Satsuki-sama, it's still Satsuki-sama's time. Every hour she spends shooting your raunchy music videos is an hour she could have spent modeling on the ramp."

"The word 'raunchy' doesn't apply to works of art," Jakuzure had replied crossly, "And I can't *afford* Satsuki's rates."

"Fine," you'd sighed dramatically. "I'll ask her if she'll be willing to take the cut out of her professional fees then."

The music executive paused and stared at you with narrowed eyes. “What happened to just helping Ryuko and Satsuki-chan out?”

“Well, Jakuzure-senpai, I don’t see why *everyone* can’t benefit from this arrangement across the board.”

The pink-haired executive shot you a look of grudging respect. “Now I know why Satsuki-chan made you the head of COVER Talent. I have to say, Mankanshoku, you’re as deceptively innocent-looking as your mother’s croquettes.”

“Is that a compliment coming from you, Jakuzure-senpai?”

“Only if that’s how you want to take it, Mankanshoku.”

People didn’t realize it, but being seen as an underachiever certainly had its perks.



[Image](#) of a genderbending Satsuki illustrated by artist [Shrimp](#).

Attaque Brusquée

~~~~~MATOI RYUKO~~~~~

It had been a long while since you'd wielded a sword, and it was only as you moved through the various forms that you realized how much you'd missed the art.

For months, the practice had been one of the ways you'd bonded with your sister—a means of discovering the *shoshin*, *zanshin*, *fudoshin* and *mushin* states of mind that were so critical to understanding the way Satsuki thought and acted.

And with Satsuki as your teacher, your skill with the sword had grown by leaps and bounds. Your sister had become impossible to defeat however—even when you resorted to tactics that were unorthodox at best and underhanded at worst. Her reflexes had now come to border on a precognition that vastly exceeded Sanageyama's Shingantsu.

But even if you couldn't beat her, on good days you could fight her to a draw. You remembered the last time you'd managed to point your swords at her throat—she'd stopped your thrusts by bringing Ikigai down in time.

You'd been about to declare the tie when you saw the corner of her mouth lift. With a movement that would have certainly drawn blood if anyone else had done it, she'd pressed down on your blades with her sword and used their points to rip the front of her *kendogi* open. Your eyes had widened as the generous swells of her breasts had come exposed—and she'd promptly exploited your distraction to hurl you to the floor.

By the time you'd blinked your eyes open, she'd managed to pin your arms down and straddle your waist. "It's not like you to use underhanded tactics," you'd spoken mildly with just the slightest hint of disapproval. She'd merely shrugged and smiled. "It seemed a pity not to employ them when I've been learning from the best."

"Is that a compliment coming from you?"

"Only if that's how you want to take it."

You were eyeing her glorious cleavage openly by then. "There are other things I certainly want to take..." you'd murmured, giving her a suggestive smile.

She'd raised an eyebrow in response, and a corner of her mouth had lifted. Gazing straight into your mesmerized eyes, she'd slowly and sensuously slipped the sleeves of her torn *kendogi* from her shoulders until she was naked to the waist.

Then taking your hands, she'd cupped them around the fullness of her breasts and whispered in your ear. "Go ahead then. They're yours for the taking..."

You'd sat up and used your tongue and lips to tease an already hardened nipple while your other hand had possessively palmed her other breast. "Only these?" you'd murmured, as she began to moan in time to your ministrations.

"Those and everything else," she'd gasped, grinding her hips suggestively against your waist. You'd used your bare hands then to rip the rest of her uniform off—and spend the rest of the morning thrusting your tongue and fingers (sword-like) into the shaft between her legs...

Then a husky voice had interrupted your reveries and brought you back to the present day.

"You were doing so beautifully, Ryuko-san, until your thoughts started to wander off."

You'd completed the form you were performing gracefully and turned around to face your sister. You actually hadn't seen each other since the day Mako and Nonon had launched their coup. Right after the interlude you'd both secretly enjoyed in a locked corner office, Mako had spirited Satsuki away for yet another of her innumerable shoots.

She was dressed as Soichiro again, but in a style that you recognized as a masculine version of yours. Black leather pants ended in black leather boots while a black leather choker bisected a pale and slender neck.

For a moment, you'd briefly wondered if her sole intent was to test your self-control. A male Satsuki in glammed up Goth was decidedly hazardous to mental health.

Not that you could afford to break down in such a public space: Gamagori's security cameras covered even the vast expanse of the studio's gardens.

"I have...fond memories of sword fighting, Soichiro-san," you'd replied in a slightly breathless voice. "When I don't have anyone to spar with, they can distract me from my form."

"Perhaps I could be of assistance then, Ryuko-san," your sister had replied, a wicked and familiar gleam in her mesmerizing eyes. "I have some experience with the sword." Then gesturing at the blades you held, she'd added, "I can use your *tanto* and you can use your *wakizashi*—the differences in length should neutralize the advantage I have in height."

You'd nodded in agreement, suddenly feeling the rush of adrenaline and anticipation that always preceded combat with your sister.

You'd attacked first, as you were wont to do, and the moment Satsuki parried, you knew that something was afoot. She'd warded your strike off much too late, allowing you to come perilously close, and as your arm nearly glanced off her chest, you felt her nose lightly graze the back of your neck.

It was the briefest of touches—but you suddenly realized what your sister had planned. It was, for lack of a better term, foreplay disguised as swordplay, and it was *so* like Satsuki to mount a deception on that note.



Resuming your stance, you allowed a corner of your mouth to lift. After all, playing *dirty* had always been your style...

Thirty minutes later though, you were breathing uncharacteristically hard—and little of it had to do with actual physical exertion. You'd remembered too late the overwhelming power of your sister's *chi*, and when it was tinged all over with a sexual hue, it was impossible not to be well and truly aroused. Every time she attacked, she managed to land a covert caress—a touch so feathery light, it was as if it never happened, but you could feel your hairs stand on end every time it occurred. At one point, it was all you could do not to moan when steel rang against steel. The air was so thick with the tension between you both that you could actually feel the sparks flying whenever your blades clashed.

Your only consolation was the fact that you apparently produced the same effect. Your sister's eyes had turned a stormy shade of blue, and as you rushed at her in a new assault, she'd suddenly gone serious and deflected your blow with unexpected strength. You'd have stumbled to the floor if she'd hadn't caught you around the waist—a look of genuine contrition in her cobalt eyes. “My apologies, Ryuko-san,” she'd murmured, her arm drawing you even closer to her chest, “that was unforgivably bad form on my end.”

“Apology accepted, Soichiro-san,” you'd replied breathlessly, the nearness of her presence inducing an all too-familiar vertiginous rush. Three years later and she could still arouse you with just a look, a smile, a kiss or a caress. All you could think about in that moment was the moisture on the lips drawing perilously close to yours. You'd already closed your eyes in anticipation, public spaces and security cameras be damned, when a French-accented voice promptly broke the spell.

“Ahh...So this is where you two were this entire time.”

~~~~~ARIANNE RENARDE~~~~~

You'd already been watching them for a few minutes before you'd made your presence felt.

You'd arrived late for the meeting—as you always did—and everyone else had been present with the exception of the lead actors involved. Jakuzure had been slightly concerned (“It's not like Sa—Soichiro-kun to show up late...”) and with a brief apology, she'd left the room to search for her and Mankanshoku's charges.

Never one to sit still, you'd wandered out yourself and made a beeline for the garden where you'd supposed you wouldn't be barred from having a smoke. The clash of steel against steel had drawn your attention, and that was how you'd found them both.

The first time you'd glimpsed them, you'd found yourself rooted to the spot. You had, quite frankly, never seen anything as lethally exquisite...and as stunningly *erotic*. What you'd seen and studied of the *chanbara* genre had not quite prepared you to witness what you supposed

was the genuine thing. The fact that the both of them were using *real* swords added to the surrealism of the scene.

But it wasn't simply the poetry of their swordplay that had you frozen where you stood—it was the fact that the chemistry between them was unmatched by anything you'd ever filmed. The air was so thick with the tension between them both that you could actually feel the sparks flying whenever their blades clashed. As you watched them dance their lethal dance—the beauty of their faces enhanced by the elegance of their forms, their bodies hardly touching but their souls appearing to meld—you were struck by a sudden bolt of inspiration. An idea more massive than anything you'd ever conceived to date began to form in your captivated mind...

You'd only surfaced from your haze when you saw Soichiro lean down, blue eyes blazing—and an unexpected burst of jealous mischief (of whom and for whom, you couldn't even begin to tell)—had you speak out in a lazy drawl:

“Ahh...So this is where you two were this entire time.”





[Image](#) of Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist [Peach Road Fruit](#).

Conflit d'Intérêts

~~~~~MANKANSHOKU MAKO~~~~~

You'd known what she wanted to talk about the moment you got the call. The screaming on the other side of the phone was loud enough to cause a ringing in your skull.

"Damn it, Mankanshoku! Can't you rein in that insufferable Kiryuin???"

"There, there, Jakuzure-senpai. No damage was actually done..."

A fresh burst of yelling had you pull the receiver away from your ear again. "No damage done??? Arianne-san left the meeting without a backward glance!!! I am *not* going to let anything *ruin* my second chance with Renarde—and that includes Satsuki-chan..."

You'd let the music executive rant for a few more minutes before responding in a laudably conciliatory tone (it seemed you did little these days apart from placating your pink-haired senior). "From what I heard, Jakuzure-senpai, Arianne-san left immediately because she wanted to completely rework her idea for the shoot—*not* because she was upset."

The other line had gone quiet. You'd suspected that Jakuzure-senpai had known Arianne-san's real intentions, but had embroidered events a bit to inflate her sense of indignation.

"Well, we don't really know that for *sure*," she'd finally replied in a huff. "The point is: you've got to keep Satsuki-chan in line."

"Wouldn't you do a better job of that as her best friend, Jakuzure-senpai?"

You'd heard the other woman snort. "Are you kidding me? That makes me the *last* person who can hold her back. I'm serious, Mankanshoku. She might have gotten away with it this time, but we can't have Satsuki-chan keep ambushing Ryuko like this. Besides the fact that they could be found out—and Arianne-san has a sharp nose for these kinds of things—Ryuko can't focus enough to get a decent day's work in!"

You'd sighed. If Satsuki-sama's antics were bad enough to distract Ryuko-chan from her music, then intervention was certainly required.

"Alright, Jakuzure-senpai. I'll deal with Satsuki-sama."

As soon as you'd hung up the phone, you'd sighed again. There were very, very *few* people who could manage Satsuki-sama when she was tempted by her sister into doing illogical and irrational things.

With another sigh, you'd picked up your mobile phone and dialed a number. You fervently hoped your charm would work for this particular request.

“Gamagori-senpai? Can I ask you a really, really big favor?”

~~~~~KIRYUIN SATSUKI~~~~~

You knew they were all puzzled—your sister most of all—but then again you’d been a little bit surprised by your behavior as well.

But the thing was: you truly missed Ryuko, and you’d missed her more and more intensely as the long months had passed. Although you worked in an industry where beautiful men and women were a commonplace, only your sister had ever managed to take your breath away. Men *and* women had courted you, wooed you, and promised you everything that money, power and status could possibly obtain, but the only person you’d ever wanted was the fierce and stubborn creature who shared your blood and home.

And after everything you’d been through together, this injunction to keep your relationship a secret had struck you as almost...trifling in its significance. You wouldn’t have cared a jot if it had meant risking your career—but you certainly weren’t willing to do anything that could hold Ryuko back. Your sister was genuinely talented in and wholeheartedly passionate about her music, and you wished for nothing more than her success. For that reason, and that reason alone, you’d agreed to hide the one thing that mattered to you the most.

You remembered the last time you’d been able to watch her live. Fairly early in your sister’s career, Nonon had already asked you to keep your presence discreet. You’d watched her walk out onto the spotlight flooded stage, a scarlet-gloved hand holding the blood red guitar she’d taken to calling Senketsu, the sheer charisma of her presence raising the crowd’s adoration to fever pitch. Although hundreds of people filled the stands, she’d known *exactly* where to look, and as her piercing blue eyes had locked with yours, her lips had curved in a tender smile.

I love you, she’d mouthed, as the crowd around you had broken out in rabid applause—and even if she’d said it a few times before, it never failed to cause a massive constriction in your throat and chest. Then she’d begun to sing, and even if you’d already heard it countless times, you felt the sultriness of her voice penetrate the very marrow of your heart and bones. She’d played that way the rest of the night, pausing before each song began to single you out among the throngs, her face softening the way it did when it was just you two and you two alone.

Later, after the concert had ended, you’d automatically threaded your way through the crowd, a congratulatory smile on your lips. Then you’d heard a voice call out softly behind you. “Satsuki-sama...” You’d turned around and found Mankanshoku, a look of contrite disapproval on her otherwise placid face. You’d looked back at Ryuko, and although hundreds of people filled the hall, she’d known *exactly* where to look, and as her concerned blue eyes had locked with yours, her lips had turned down in a helpless frown.

The restraints on your behavior had only escalated after that—especially as your fame and Ryuko’s had grown. You’d watched, with a sense of irony, the gradual effacement of the public aspect of the life you shared together. You’d committed the first erasure three years ago when you’d asked Inumuta to have the records of your sibling relationship destroyed—you hadn’t quite expected the obliteration to become so total in its scope.

And so it had become a relationship that could thrive only in the shadows: in the dark, in the midnight hours, in the claustrophobic confines of a very tiny circle of havens and friends. You’d found yourself envying the unconscious and inconsequential gestures that passed between lovers in the public sphere: the embraces liberally given, the hands carelessly held, the kisses freely dispensed... You hadn’t realized how much you’d wanted to be free of the constraints until Mankanshoku and Nonon had suggested their hare brained scheme—and then, without batting an eyelash, you’d immediately said yes. You knew at the back of your calculating mind that the plan involved significant risks and would be better launched if some time were spent beforehand anticipating consequences and outcomes. But a mixture of trust in the concern of your friends and the urgency behind your long-suppressed yearning had led you to make an uncharacteristically rash decision.

At the moment, the risk that was uppermost in your mind was the threat posed by the French film maker Arianne Renarde. The red-headed director was certainly a predator—you’d recognized it the moment she’d laid her emerald eyes on you at the café—but you were a child of Kiryuin Ragyo after all, and after your mother’s depredations, the attentions of an amorous Frenchwoman were easy enough to evade.

Ryuko, however, was another matter entirely. Your sister was an innocent—it was one of the things you loved about her most—and you knew what was likely to happen if Arianne Renarde managed to corner her in a moment of isolation. Ryuko simply wouldn’t know how to refuse the film maker’s advances without causing either embarrassment or offense, and you already knew from Nonon that she’d already turned the director down once.

No, in this particular instance, intervention was required. And there were very, very *few* people whom you trusted whenever you were tempted by your sister into doing illogical and irrational things.

You’d picked up your mobile phone and dialed a number. You already knew, with what Ryuko had called your imperious self-assurance, that no refusal was forthcoming to your particular request.

“Gamagori? I need you to do something for me.”

~~~~~GAMAGORI IRA~~~~~

It was, you’d thought morosely, the n<sup>th</sup> time in the last several months that you’d found yourself conflicted between your allegiance to your mistress and your devotion to your girlfriend.

Satsuki-sama's call had come in first, and although you weren't entirely sure why Matoi would possibly need protection (not with her preposterous strength and imbecilic audacity) you'd agreed to her request nevertheless.

"Shadow her, Gamagori, and under no circumstances are you to let anyone touch my sister."

Then your girlfriend had called and made almost exactly the same request—except for what you felt was an extremely important qualification:

"Follow Ryuko-chan, Gamagori-senpai, and under no circumstances are you to let anyone touch her—*especially* Satsuki-sama."

Never in your life had you managed to overcome the will of Satsuki-sama. Now that that implacable will was joined to an impulse to do illogical and irrational things—motivated by what you could see was her fierce and ardent love for her sister—you had no idea how your girlfriend expected you to actually stand your ground (as you had done once before).

Life, you'd concluded for the  $n^{\text{th}}$  time in several months, was really complicated when you were an Invincible Shield for someone like Kiryuin Satsuki.





*Image of Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist Emuro Gemini.*



# L'Interdit

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### ~~~~~JAKUZURE NONON~~~~~

You'd known she was feverishly excited by the fact that she was barely late. With a dramatic flourish that only the French seemed able to pull off, she'd planted her manicured hands on the mahogany table and declared:

"This collaboration will be our chance to do something completely unprecedented in the history of contemporary music. While artists have shared entire narratives through the extended music video—no *one* has ever used an entire album to tell a single story. No one, that is, until *us*."

Then turning to the projector screen behind her, she'd begun flashing a series of vivid images. "Imagine two characters—two souls, really—who encounter each other time and again across cultures and across eras. They fall in love each and every time, but in every single encounter, circumstances drive them apart. Their story is reflected in the world's most tragic romances, from Paris and Helen, to Mark Antony and Cleopatra, to Lancelot and Guinevere, to Abelard and Heloise, to Romeo and Juliet...the list goes on and on. Every song and every video in this album will be a testament to a love that endures through time and through space, through the vicissitudes of history and through the capriciousness of desire."

As the screen had faded to black behind her, taking away the images of doomed love, the filmmaker had continued. "We will call the album *Taboo*—and it will celebrate how love makes a mockery of all things forbidden."

All of you around the table had sat spell-bound, bewitched by both her vision and her passion. For the first time, you began to understand the true extent of the Frenchwoman's genius.

Then a hesitant voice had broken the spell.

"I think it's brilliant, Renarde-san," your charge had slowly voiced. "Unfortunately, most of the songs I've written for this new album don't exactly fit what you have in mind..."

The director had turned to Ryuko with a dangerous smile. "It shouldn't be a problem for an artist as gifted as you, Ryuko-chan. If you've ever felt the joy and the pain of unrequited love, if you've ever endured the agonies and ecstasies of unrelenting longing, if you've ever struggled with the burdens and the blessings of unalleviated desire, then you can certainly write the songs. Scrap everything else you've written and start again from scratch. Unless, of course, you don't have the experience that serves as the well-spring for such material..."

You'd watched your charge hesitate. The film maker's comment was both barb and bait—an ingenuous ruse to elicit information about Ryuko's private life. But three years of living with her calculating sister had taught Ryuko the virtues of looking closely at abysses before taking any actual leaps.

In the end though, it was the same calculating sister who came to Ryuko's rescue. "I'm certain Ryuko-san can manage with the help of Jakuzure-senpai," Satsuki had spoken in her guise as the charming Soichiro-kun. Cobalt blue eyes met yours, and you'd nodded your head just a tiny bit.

"I'll make sure Ryuko has whatever...inspiration she needs to write," you'd added glibly, knowing full well that you'd asked Mankanshoku to do the exact opposite just the other day.

Ryuko-chan had slowly nodded. "Alright, Renarde-san. Challenge accepted. I'll write the songs as we go along."

The film maker had clapped her hands in approval. "Excellent, Ryuko-chan. I've already decided on the location for the first video." Glancing at everyone else around the room, the Frenchwoman had continued. "We'll do the shoot in Kyoto, for a tragic samurai romance that takes place in the Sengoku Period." Then with a glittering smile on her lovely face, the director had added, "We'll take Japan by storm first—and then the rest of the world will follow!"

And just like that, Arianne Renarde had wrested full control of your charge's next album release. For some reason, you didn't mind all that much.

## -----IORI SHIRO-----

You'd been in your lab as always, looking at the latest research results, when she'd strolled in casually with the same smirk she'd worn back in your high school days.

"Doesn't it get boring, Iori?" she'd asked by way of greeting, looking around at the room littered by computer monitors, electron microscopes and fabric samples. "I can imagine research being exciting if what's at stake is the end of the world, but we're just on standby now, waiting for something that may never even happen."

"We find things exciting because we love them, Jakuzure," you'd replied mildly. "It's not that we love them because we find them exciting."

She'd raised an eyebrow. "A deft mind to match deft hands. Well said, Iori. In which case, my question is: can I steal you away from what you love long enough to do something else altogether?"

"Does it involve Satsuki-sama?"

"Yes."

“Then it’s not something else altogether, is it? What do you need?”

“I need a couturier skilled enough to create detailed period costumes in very short spans of time. One of the costumes has to be tailored to make a...well-endowed woman pass as a man.”

You’d stared at her with narrowed eyes. “What on earth have you gotten Satsuki-sama into?”

“Nothing that she didn’t want to get into herself,” the pink-haired music executive had smoothly replied.” You’d continued staring at her without a word until she’d finally sighed. “It’s the only way she and Ryuko can spend time together in broad daylight for now.”

You’d finally nodded. “Just let me know exactly what you need and by when.”

As she was about to leave, you’d called out after her.

“Does Inumuta know about any of this?” The figure by the door had hesitated.

“I haven’t had the chance to tell him yet. Not a word to the dog about this okay?” Then she’d left without waiting for your reply.

You’d sighed then and shaken your head. Although you thought it was a lapse of judgment on Jakuzure’s part to have executed a plan without Inumuta’s involvement, you were glad that she’d engineered one nonetheless. You knew (as your uncle did) that Satsuki-sama wasn’t bearing the long separations from her sister well. The time they’d spent together—just her and Ryuko both—had been far too brief, and during that short interval Satsuki-sama had been happier than you’d ever seen.

You weren’t sure when it started, though you remember a beginning of sorts when you’d seen them at that first dinner with your uncle’s “signature croquettes.” Ryuko-sama had been uncharacteristically shy; Satsuki-sama had been uncharacteristically breathless. You’d conjectured then that their mutual geniality would wear thin soon enough given the headstrong natures they’d inherited from their mother. With characteristic foresight, however, Satsuki-sama had forestalled that eventuality by steering clear of anything potentially contentious in the beginning of their re-acquaintance.

And then Satsuki-sama had fallen gravely ill, and conflict had become altogether impossible. What that illness had birthed, on the other hand, was possibly the most valiant gesture of love you’d ever witnessed. For the rest of your life, you would never forget the determined line of Ryuko-sama’s deathly white lips as you’d carved that long, red incision down the middle of her chest...In that moment, she’d won the allegiance that you’d only ever reserved for her older sister.

You’d watched the agony in those cobalt blue eyes transform to a different kind of pain altogether in the weeks that had followed—Ryuko-sama gazing perpetually at her sister with a look of haunted and desperate longing. You knew how desirable your mistress was (you’d seen that same look of yearning on countless faces in long years past) and you pitied the younger Kiryuin for what was likely be an impossible love. Regardless of how Satsuki-sama

actually felt, your mistress was logical and rational to the core and even she would balk at indulging an incestuous relationship with all the inconvenience it entailed.

What you'd never expected was Ryuko-sama's gift for provoking Satsuki-sama into doing illogical and irrational things. If you understood the few things that the younger Kiryuin had ever said about her unorthodox...bond with her sister, it seemed that it was actually Satsuki-sama who had *initiated* their relationship (and then simply used her decisive pragmatism to annul any inconvenience that could have been entailed).

And you had to admit—as did the Divas—that it was a relationship that suited them both. They understood each other in ways no one else possibly could, and complemented each other in ways that allowed less developed aspects of their personalities to emerge. Ryuko gave Satsuki permission to be vulnerable (a license that she exercised in unconscious and inconsequential gestures like falling asleep with her head on Ryuko's lap); Satsuki gave Ryuko confirmation that she was needed (a knowledge that extinguished much of the anger that had always seethed under the younger Kiryuin's skin). In short, they were rather remarkably perfect for each other, and it had made you glad (as it had made your uncle glad) to know that Satsuki-sama had found happiness at last.

But life, it seemed, could get in the way of even the most perfectly matched couples—which meant that the intervention of family and friends was required. At that moment, you'd decided that your research would have to take the back seat.

Some loves were simply far more important than others.

## -----MATOI RYUKO-----

Irony was more your sister's thing, but even you couldn't ignore the quirk of fate that had you and Satsuki working together on a project about *forbidden* love, of all things.

Arianne Renarde had attempted to provoke you with that comment about your possible inexperience in the illicit, but few things were as seriously taboo as maintaining a romantic *and* sexual relationship with one's older sister.

In addition, everything you'd ever needed for your art you'd found in the life you shared with Satsuki. In the entire history of your interactions with your sister, you'd gone through the whole gamut of human emotions: from unremitting hatred and hostility, to grudging respect and camaraderie, to, strangely and unexpectedly, heartbreaking tenderness and insatiable desire.

Unrelenting longing? You only had to remember the weeks you'd endured what you'd believed was a one-sided love. Helpless fury? You only had to recall the instant you'd discovered the extent of Satsuki's abuse in your mother's hands. Hopeless despair? You only had to recollect those days when she'd lain on the brink of death. Stark terror? You only had

to remember the moments when you'd watched her nearly die. Tremulous happiness? You only had to recall the night when you made love to her the first time.

In short, Satsuki was your muse, your inspiration, the fuel, the match and the conflagration, all in one—and the life you shared together *was* a celebration of how love had made a mockery of all things that were forbidden.

With your mouth set in a fierce and stubborn line, you'd taken a pen and sheets of music paper and settled down to work.

For the n<sup>th</sup> time in several months, you were grateful for the endurance granted by extraterrestrial genes.



*[Image](#) of Ryuko and Satsuki illustrated by artist [Ryosuke Inuyama](#).*

## Chapter End Notes

I've toyed with this model-musician-collaboration-on-an-album-about-time-and space-spanning-forbidden-love for YEARS (first for a *Sailor Moon* piece between Aino

Minako and Hino Rei and then for a *Neon Genesis Evangelion* piece between Ayanami Rei and Soryu Asuka). I just never got around to it and now I know the reason why: It was so I could save it all for an all-out romance between Satsuki and Ryuko. X-D The God of Fanfiction Writers is kind.

And for those who haven't had the chance yet to read the first story of this series, many of the events Iori recollects in this chapter (i.e., the dinner with his uncle's "signature croquettes," the early stages of Satsuki's and Ryuko's re-acquaintance, the fateful surgery where Ryuko saves Satsuki's life and the weeks Ryuko pines for her sister) can all be found in Chapter 3 ([\*\*The Unraveling\*\*](#)), Chapter 4 ([\*\*The Stitching\*\*](#)) and Chapter 7 ([\*\*The Quilting\*\*](#)) of [\*Le Fil Rouge du Destin\*](#).

# Retrouvailles I

~~~~~SANAGEYAMA UZU~~~~~

It had been a long while since you'd wielded a sword, and it was only as you moved through the various forms that you realized how much you'd missed the art.

For years, the practice had been your sole refuge—the one thing of shining beauty in an existence that had been otherwise dulled by the coarseness and vulgarity of life in a gang.

“You seem just the slightest bit rusty, Sanageyama-san.”

You'd completed the form you'd been performing gracefully and turned to the figure behind you with a smirk. “That doesn't make me any less of a force to be reckoned with...Soichiro-kun.” Sliding your sword back into its scabbard, you'd added: “You don't seem all that surprised to find me here.”

Your former mistress had slightly shrugged. “Few swordsmen in the world will be able to approximate my skill with the blade—even if it's only for something as simulated as a shoot. I figured Nonon would ask you to be a member of the cast.”

“That's high praise coming from you, if you say that I approximate your strength.”

She'd been about to respond when you saw her cobalt blue eyes widen at something far behind your back. It was the first time in your life that you'd ever seen such a mesmerized expression on Satsuki-sama's face. You'd turned around to find the source of her distraction, and for a moment, found that even you were rooted to the spot.

It was Matoi Ryuko—only Matoi as you'd *never* seen her before.

She was attired in a *furisode* kimono featuring an intricately drawn landscape of the sea and sky. For a breathless instant, you'd marveled at the fact that such a simple change in dress could create such a striking and dramatic effect. Her face was turned in quarter profile, part of it hidden by the curtain of her raven hair, and as she'd bent her head to adjust an errant fold, she'd presented the very picture of Japanese beauty from ages past. You'd suddenly wondered why you hadn't noticed until then—how you could have possibly failed to notice until then—how remarkably *pretty* she was. Then you'd remembered who it was that you were ogling and you'd turned back quickly to Satsuki-sama.

She was still staring at her sister, a look of rapt adoration on her face, and in that moment, you'd felt a pang of comradely affection for this indomitable woman who had turned out to be oh-so human after all. You'd wondered briefly if it was a good opportunity for a surprise attack—

“Don't even think you can sneak up on me, Sanageyama.”

You'd been about to feign your innocence with an expression of righteous indignation when you saw the cobalt blue eyes narrow in a way that made your hairs stand on end. Looking back across the field again, you watched the French film maker Arianne Renarde make her way to Matoi with a gleam in her viridescent eyes.

The woman had drawn close and murmured something in Matoi's ear, and you'd watched with mild concern as Satsuki-sama's grip on her sword had tightened at the sight of her sister's blush. The grip tightened even further when the Frenchwoman's pale and slender hand reached out towards the collar of Ryuko's robe—

“Arianne Renarde-sama!!!” The boom of that familiar voice had caused you—and the red-haired director as well—to practically jump where you both stood. Just behind the director towered Gamagori, a framed photograph of the Frenchwoman in his tightly-clenched fists.

“I beg your indulgence, Renarde-sama. My name is Gamagori Ira and I am your biggest fan—not just metaphorically but probably also literally. Would you do me the honor of autographing your picture?”

You'd glanced sideways at your former mistress, and upon noticing the slight smile that played upon her lips, suspected that Gamagori knew next to nothing about cinema, let alone who Arianne Renarde was.

In an instant, Satsuki-sama had vanished from your side, and with a few deft movements of her snow white blade, had severed a clump of dark blue hydrangeas from a nearby shrub.

While a visibly irate Renarde tried to brush off a persistent Gamagori, Satsuki-sama had walked over to her sister and offered her the bouquet.

“Any soul would incarnate across time and space simply to behold your beauty again, Ryukosan,” you'd heard her murmur as the blush on her sister's cheeks had deepened.

Even you found yourself impressed by the gallantry of the speech. A dozen feet away, you heard a few female crew members sigh in enraptured envy. Then you'd started for the second time that morning when you heard another familiar voice pipe up somewhere to your left.

“For someone who's never romanced a girl before, Satsuki-sama really knows how to sweep them off their feet. But then again, she always was a genius at everything she did.” You'd looked at the man who'd materialized by your side with surprise. “Iori??? What brings you to Kyoto?”

“Who, rather than what, Sanageyama—and the answer happens to be your girlfriend.” Gesturing at his staff ID, he'd explained: “She hired me to be the costume designer for this production.” Looking at you with a smile, the former Sewing Club President had added: “It feels like a reunion, doesn't it? Practically everyone is here, apart from Inumuta.”

“That's true,” you'd replied, an answering smile playing on your lips. “Three years later, and we're all still here.” You'd paused for a moment then qualified: “Three years later, and we're all still planets orbiting around the sun that's Satsuki-sama.”

Iori had looked at you with an eyebrow raised. “I didn’t know you to be a poet, Sanageyama.”

You’d shrugged. “I’ve had to up my game since she started dressing like that. She was already impossibly attractive as a woman—now she’s insufferably fascinating as a man.”

Iori had chuckled. “She gets that charisma from her mother—as does Matoi. I wouldn’t worry about losing Nonon to Satsuki-sama, though. Your girlfriend’s the type who prefers to be on top.”

With that, the blonde couturier had walked away. It took you another moment to realize the full import of what he’d said.

“Oi!” You’d yelled at his back in annoyance. “What was that supposed to mean?”

He’d simply waved at you without bothering to look around.

Three years had passed, but some things had stayed the same indeed.

It was almost enough to make you miss Inumuta.

~~~~~ARIANNE RENARDE~~~~~

A few weeks had passed since your dramatic pitch at the COVER Music Studio, and after days of frantic preparation, your entire cast and crew had finally assembled in a remote location in Kyoto. You’d known you were feverishly excited by the fact that you’d stopped caring to be fashionably late. It had been a long, *long* while since life had been this interesting for you on both a professional and a personal front.

One of the main items on your agenda that first day was to re-appraise the degree of chemistry between your leads—something that you typically carried out by filming your actors as they rehearsed their scripts and blocking in the costumes they were supposed to wear. Of all the elusive elements that elevated eroticism into a work of art, the most important factor was that intangible and indefinable alchemy between the leads.

Your sense of single-minded professionalism had nearly come undone, however, when you’d seen Ryuko in her azure blue kimono. Two years of watching her saunter on stage in glammed up Goth had not prepared you for the nearly physical impact of seeing her in Japanese dress. Your mouth had nearly watered at the thought of untying the finely crafted sash that held practically everything together...

“I’ve heard that it’s nearly impossible for Japanese women to put a kimono on by themselves these days,” you’d murmured to her by way of greeting. “If you ever need assistance taking this off, Ryuko-chan, I’d be more than happy to assist...”

The blush that had crept across her cheeks then had made it impossible to resist, and on an impulse, you'd lifted a hand towards the collar of her robe—

—only to be crudely interrupted by that colossus of a man who'd shockingly turned out to be Mankanshoku's boyfriend. The giant had materialized from out of nowhere, and you'd had to watch in dismay as Soichiro had exploited your distraction to give a bouquet of dark blue hydrangeas to the object of your lust.

Then the figure of Soichiro himself had come into sharp focus in your mind—it was the first time you'd actually seen him that day—and for the second time that morning, you'd found yourself uncharacteristically dazzled.

He was dressed as a ronin, which should have made for an unspectacular sight given the rather severe plainness of the costume. But something about the way he stood, the way he moved, his almost archaic nobility and his panther-like grace made him an unusually arresting figure as he strode back across the field.

Later that day, as you'd had him and Ryuko rehearse their scenes together, you'd marveled all over again at the unprecedented chemistry between both leads. They simply had to be in the same room and the air around them fairly sizzled. You'd noticed how Ryuko trembled ever so slightly whenever Soichiro drew near, and though you'd always regarded the musician as a thoroughgoing tomboy, something about Soichiro's presence tended to draw out an unsuspected and surprisingly seductive femininity.

It was an effect that you couldn't quite explain, but which you nevertheless understood as you'd felt it yourself at various times. Soichiro made *you* want to bow at his feet and beg on your knees, a litany of illicit and inappropriate requests falling from your lips. (For some unaccountable reason, the fantasy always came with an image of Soichiro looking down from a vast and haloed height, his pale and slender hands resting on the pommel of his snow white blade.) It was a disconcerting flight of fancy for someone who preferred women to men—and who preferred being the subject rather than the object of subjugation in bed.

It was that same inexplicable charisma, however, that accounted for why Soichiro attracted far more of the women in the crew than the other lead actor, Sanageyama (who'd also surprisingly turned out to be Jakuzure's boyfriend). While Sanageyama had the more attractive physique—Soichiro's frame was so slender it bordered on being feminine rather than masculine—the latter exuded a certain *je ne sais quoi*. Even the men in the crew found themselves uncomfortably drawn to his presence, as you'd overheard from random snippets of water cooler conversation. In the end, you'd decided that the Japanese talent was a decided hazard to mental health, which meant, in turn, that the videos were going to be a smashing success.

The enigma that you really wanted to unravel, however, was what Ryuko thought about Soichiro-kun. That she was as vulnerable to his charms as everyone else was apparent enough from their interactions, but that didn't mean she was interested in being pursued. For the most part, and just like your investigations had revealed, she kept to herself when she wasn't needed for the rehearsals, composing and practicing in relative isolation with her guitar. Whether Soichiro even wanted to pursue Ryuko or not was also proving difficult to divine as he was uniformly gallant to the women and equally friendly with the men.

All of which meant, in the end, that you couldn't decide which of your two quarries to pursue first or how.

Life *truly* was more interesting when you had two quarries instead of one.



[Image](#) of Satsuki illustrated by artist [Kawacy](#).

Rendez-Vous

~~~~~KIRYUIN SATSUKI~~~~~

It was late in the evening as you'd slipped through the hallways of the mostly slumbering inn, just one more shadow among the many shadows of the night.

For obvious reasons, you and Ryuko had been given rooms apart, and you'd spent the whole day in an agony of desire, waiting for the relief that only a midnight tryst could bring.

It was the first time you'd ever seen her in a kimono, and the effect was completely and utterly...devastating. In the three years you'd lived together with Ryuko, the most womanly item of clothing you'd ever seen her wear was the uniform she'd worn to school. And although having a world-famous supermodel for a sister and a media-savvy musician for a manager had radically improved her sense of style, there was only so much one could do with a wardrobe built exclusively out of leather boots, skintight jeans, halter tops and bomber jackets.

Which was why seeing her in traditional Japanese dress had been enough to knock the breath out of your lungs. The design had highlighted the cobalt blue of her eyes while the cut had revealed the delicate lines of her figure. You'd never seen your sister so ravishingly and exquisitely...feminine, and although Ryuko had always looked good in glammed up Goth, you'd belatedly realized that her rocker chick style had done little justice to her looks.

The moment you'd seen her, you'd wanted nothing more than to lay your sister down on the nearest horizontal surface and peel the layers of her elegant robes off one fastidious piece at a time. Instead, you'd kept your arousal in check and settled for giving her a bouquet of flowers to bring out the blue of her eyes.

What hadn't helped *at all* were the smoldering glances she'd sent your way throughout the day (furtive enough to evade the crew's attention, but sufficiently pointed to garner yours). You knew it was her way of repaying you for your ambush with the sword a few weeks back, and you'd had to grit your teeth against the recurring impulse to do something not just illogical and irrational but illicit and inappropriate as well. Your only consolation was the fact that you apparently had the same effect—she tended to tremble slightly whenever you drew near, her eyes turning a tumultuous shade of blue.

By the time evening had finally come, you were more on edge than you'd ever been in your entire life. After bidding the rest of the crew a polite and hasty good night, you'd made a show of returning to your room—only to slip out moments later with the sole intention of thoroughly possessing your sister. The part of your mind that remained forever aloof was slightly amused by your single minded intent. The last time you'd felt this focused and alert was when you'd attempted to kill your mother.

You were just about to traverse the hallway that led to her room when a giant figure materialized with surprising swiftness out of the dark.

“Satsuki-sama...”

The look of contrite disapproval on his otherwise loyal face told you everything that you’d needed to know.

“I know I can’t stop you...” he’d begun to say, but you’d cut him off there and then.

“It’s fine, Gamagori. I know this was hard for you to do.”

The giant’s jaw was working furiously—an internal battle of epic proportions playing itself out in the contortions of his face. “I’m sorry, Satsuki-sama...”

You’d shaken your head and smiled. “Don’t be, Gamagori. Some loves are more important than others.”

With that, you’d slipped back into the shadows and made your way back to your room, your eyebrows slanting down sharply in frustration and disappointment.

They had you and they knew it, and apparently even Gamagori was involved. They knew you wouldn’t—and couldn’t—force Gamagori’s hand, professional relationships or personal desires be damned.

You’d entered your room, your calculating and overwrought mind already hard at work on other possibilities. Ryuko in traditional Japanese dress was decidedly hazardous to mental health. You were so preoccupied with various options that you almost failed to notice that your intended quarry was actually perched on the edge of your bed in the exact same kimono that had caused you so much agony that day.

For a moment, you’d stood frozen on the spot.

She’d looked at you with faint amusement. “It’s not like you to be caught off guard.”

You’d stared at the delectable picture she’d made as she leaned back on her hands, her raven hair tumbling around her shoulders. “Well, it’s not like me to be teased so mercilessly.”

She’d smiled a heart-stopping smile. “You weren’t too hard on him, I hope.”

You’d raised an eyebrow at her and shaken your head. “Not at all. I knew why he did it. How did you know though?”

She’d chuckled. “Gamagori tends to talk to himself when he gets conflicted. I happened to overhear him, that’s all.”

“Did anyone catch you on your way here?”

“They didn’t set a watch on me as they did on you. It’s hard sneaking around in a kimono though.”

You'd looked with amusement at the uncharacteristically feminine way that she'd crossed her legs. "Limits your range of movement, I suppose."

"That's an understatement. It's a miracle I can even walk."

"You look ravishing in it though," you'd murmured as you'd drawn close.

"You don't look half bad yourself," she'd smiled, before her expression had abruptly darkened. "Practically all the women—and some of the men—in the crew had their eyes glued to you. You're probably the most dashing *ronin* they've ever seen."

"And you're the only woman this dashing *ronin* happens to want." As you'd leaned over her and traced a finger over her collar bone, you'd whispered. "Now I feel as conflicted as Gamagori."

"What's your dilemma?" she'd breathed huskily as you'd pushed her down into the bed.

"Whether to keep you in these lovely robes or to extricate you from them."

"Want to know what I think?" she'd murmured, before twining an arm around your neck and drawing you even closer.

"What do you think?" you'd smiled in reply, before skimming your nose along the curve of her jaw.

She'd drawled into your ear. "What I think is that I don't really give a damn whether I'm in these clothes or not—as long as my *ronin* of a sister gets to fuck me long and hard."

"Such indelicate words from such a delicate beauty," you'd teased as you trailed feathery kisses along her neck.

"Only because this delicate beauty wants some very indelicate treatment," she'd moaned as you grazed your teeth against her nape.

"You've gotten quite skilled in this kind of wordplay."

"I've spent three years learning from the best."

"Is that a compliment coming from you?"

"That's how you always take it, in any case."

"Ah yes, that imperious self-assurance you know and love so well."

"Oh, do stop talking, Satsuki. I've been wanting this all day." Taking your hands, she'd pressed them against her breasts. "I got wet every time you caught one of my looks..."

You'd gently squeezed the mounds that were pressing against your palms. "Unfortunately for you, my darling, I'm rather inclined to take things slow. It's not often that I get to unwrap you like an exquisite present. Some things in life are meant to be savored."

She'd nearly growled in frustration. "If I end up tearing this off, it'll be your fault."

"You'll do no such thing," you'd told her half-sternly. "It's a beautifully crafted kimono, and Iori obviously made it with a lot of care."

"How about a compromise then?"

"What do you have in mind?"

"Make me come, fast and hard, just to take the edge off. Then you can take the rest of the night to do whatever else you want."

"That pragmatism of yours does rear up at the strangest times."

"Is that a ye—*ohhh*..."

You'd already answered by slipping a hand into the folds of her robe—and your fingers into recesses already slick and wet. She'd dropped her head back, her teeth pressing into her bottom lip, her fingernails digging into your back. "Oh, *yesss*..." The way she'd hissed her pleasure caused you to emit an involuntary groan. Then she'd begun to ride your hand with an undulating movement that had driven you insane on many a long and vigorous night. "Dear God," she'd moaned as her insides clenched tightly around your fingers, "how on earth do you manage to hit that spot right away every single time...?"

"Practice makes perfect. And, I am Kiryuin Satsuki after all."

You'd stared down at her, entranced by the utter eroticism of her fully clothed hips grinding against your invisible hand, while her kimono-wrapped arms twined around your neck. You'd bent your head down and sucked a favored spot along her collarbone, applying just enough pressure to the erogenous zone to elicit the reaction you wanted without leaving any marks on her skin.

"Satsuki..." she'd whimpered, as you increased the thrust and curl of your fingers. The way she was tightening around your digits told you that she was perilously close. Then with perfect timing, you'd changed the angle of your hand just a bit, the mound of your thumb grazing the hardened nub between her folds and she came hard and fast, your hand coming up just in time to muffle her cry.

You'd held her close as she continued to spasm, then slowly withdrew your fingers and began to lick them dry.

"Allow me," she'd murmured. Then reaching for your hand, she'd slowly put your index finger into her mouth, and with her lips pressing around the base of the digit, had oh-so slowly drawn your finger out. For a moment, your world actually spun and darkened.

Then she did the exact same thing to the three other invading fingers, looking straight into your tumultuous eyes.

"Do try to keep up with your juniors, Satsuki," she'd teased as she felt your knees nearly give way. You'd moaned when she pressed her lips against the center of your trembling palm.

“It’s so like you to use underhanded tactics,” you’d muttered through gritted teeth.

“Practice makes perfect. And, I am Matoi Ryuko after all.”

It took a supreme effort of will, but you managed to pull yourself together enough to press your hands against her chest. “I’ve been wanting this all day, Ryuko, and I *always* get what I want.”

Then using your prodigious strength, you’d pinned both of her hands down with one of yours, and used the other hand to carefully peel back the edges of her robe. To reduce the resistance that you knew would come, you’d bent down and covered her mouth with yours, caressing her lips and tongue and teeth in all the ways that you knew would drive her mad.

You’d felt her arms weaken as you knew they would, and you used the opportunity to slide both your hands down and untie the *obi* that held her robe together at the waist. By the time you’d finished, both her arms were around your neck and she was moaning openly into your mouth. You’d broken off long enough to look down at your handiwork, and had frozen at the sight: Ryuko with her breasts and most of her legs exposed in the middle of a fabric-woven landscape of sea and sky, a few intricate folds of cloth concealing the part you wanted to ravish most.

She was the one who broke the spell—only to cast another. “Take me again, Satsuki,” she’d whispered, looking up at you with lidded eyes. “I want you inside me, with your fingers and your tongue...”

“I will, my darling,” you’d smiled at her. “But for now, just a little more patience.” Then twining the fingers of both of her hands with yours, you’d pressed her arms down into the bed and bent your head over a perfectly shaped breast. Then with the flat of your tongue, you’d taken a long and thorough lick of an already-hardened nipple.

“Satsuki...” she’d whimpered in distress, her back arching off the bed. You’d continued to pin her arms down as she’d writhed underneath you, lowering your mouth again and again onto her sensitized nipples, alternating between licking and sucking—and very often doing both.

In the meanwhile, one of your knees had found its way between her legs, and you could feel her wetness grinding against your thigh.

“Satsuki, *please...*” she’d moaned minutes later, nearly sobbing from the drawn-out torture, and when she begged like that you could never resist. You’d kept your eyes on her face as you bent down between her legs, your possessive gaze taking everything in. You’d watched her eyes close, her throat arch, her hands curl into fists, as you lapped, and flicked, and sucked, and nuzzled. You reveled in her scent and in her taste, the sounds of her pleasure filtering down into the private world you inhabited between her legs. Then you’d inserted one, then two, then three, of your slender fingers back into her folds—and that was when she came again, her hips bucking up and down, your name a jagged cry on her lips.

Then you’d wrapped yourself around her naked frame, both of you surrounded by a fabric-woven landscape of sea and sky.



“That was almost cruel,” she’d murmured, looking at you with the slightest hint of disapproval.

You’d had the grace to look contrite. “I’m sorry, my darling. I place the blame entirely on the kimono.”

“I’m going to have some very happy—and very distracting—memories of this robe,” she’d mumbled as you’d kissed her hair.

“It could be the start of a new ritual,” you’d suggested. “We could break in all your kimonos this way.”

“You make it sound like I’m starting a collection.”

“You can’t deny the idea has some appeal.”

“They’re not as bad as I’d thought,” she’d reluctantly conceded. “Once you get used to shuffling instead of walking.”

“I wasn’t thinking of you walking when you wore them.”

“Such indelicate thoughts from such a delicate beauty,” she’d teased.

“Only because indelicate thoughts tend to attract indelicate treatment,” you’d drawled.

“Is that an invitation coming from you?”

“That’s how you always take it, in any case.”

“Oh, do shut up, Satsuki.”

“Make me, little sister.”

She’d looked up at you with narrowed eyes, and without a sign of strain or a word of warning, flipped you over (head under feet) and promptly knocked the breath out of you for what seemed like the n<sup>th</sup> time that day.

“You’re absolutely right,” she’d murmured as she pinned your hands down with hers. “It really is so much easier to control things when you’re on top.”

You didn’t quite manage to say much else that night. Not that you’d really minded.

For the n<sup>th</sup> time in several months, you were grateful for the endurance granted by extraterrestrial genes.



*[Image](#) of Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist [Recording](#).*



# Ajustement Jaloux

❧❧❧-----MANKANSHOKU MAKO-----❧❧❧

You'd known what she wanted to talk about the moment she stepped into the room. To her credit, there was only the slightest hint of disapproval in her voice.

"I thought the intention behind this scheme was for me to see more of my sister, Nonon."

To your pink-haired senpai's credit, there was only the slightest tinge of defensiveness in her voice. "An intention that *has* been fulfilled, Satsuki-chan. After all, you've seen Ryuko more in these last few weeks than you'd normally do in half a year. At the same time, seeing more of your sister does *not* equate to jumping her bones every chance you get."

Satsuki-sama had inclined her head. "Touché, Nonon. But that just means I've traded one set of constraints for another. And let's not forget the fact that *you* brought Arianne Renarde into this—a notorious womanizer who *will* jump my sister's bones if she manages to get the chance."

Unrepentant pink eyes stared back at unflinching blue ones, and sensing the aggression that was emanating from both women in waves, you'd found yourself jumping right into the fray.

"Why don't we just have Sanageyama-senpai ask Ryuko-chan out? Then she wouldn't be available and Renarde-sama would have to stop bothering her!"

Jakuzure-senpai had shot you a venomous look. "Even if I were generous enough to lend my boyfriend—which I'm not—the whole crew happens to know that I'm going out with Uzu."

You'd blithely ignored the poison in the music executive's gaze. "No problem, Jakuzure-senpai. We can just tell them he ditched you for Ryuko-chan."

"Mankanshoku," the pink-haired executive had grated through clenched teeth, "remind me, when all this is over, to chop you up and send the pieces to your mother to put into her croquettes." Then she'd paused for a moment, a thoughtful look flitting across her face. "On the other hand, even I have to admit that your idea possesses a certain...merit. We can keep Renarde-san away from Ryuko if we manage to find a suitable male."

"How about Mikisugi-senpai?" you'd chirped again. "I always thought he had a pervy thing going for Ryuko-chan..."

You'd trailed off the moment you'd seen the look on Satsuki-sama's face.

"No, Mankanshoku," your charge had spoken in a deceptively mild voice. "That rainbow-hued exhibitionist is NOT coming anywhere near my sister."

“If I may make a suggestion, Satsuki-sama,” your boyfriend had suddenly rumbled, “why don’t *you* ask Matoi out?”

All three of you had stared blankly at Gamagori-senpai.

He’d cleared his throat, suddenly embarrassed by all the attention. “I mean, now that you’re a man—er, now that you’re disguised as a man—the reason that’s prevented you from being with Matoi no longer holds.”

All three of you had looked at your boyfriend with startled and newly-heightened respect.

“I can’t believe I didn’t think of that!” Jakuzure-senpai had moaned after a pause, an odd combination of annoyance, embarrassment and disgust etched all over her face. “Urgh, for the frog to have thought of it before I did...I’ll never live it down.”

“You’re welcome, Jakuzure,” Gamagori-senpai had drily replied.

“Ask Ryuko out...” Satsuki-sama had slowly repeated, a frighteningly mischievous look dawning on her beautiful face. “This is getting far more interesting that even I had anticipated. Thank you, Gamagori.”

The giant had flushed. “It’s nothing, Satsuki-sama. Consider it a gesture of apology for the incident from the other night.”

“Like I said, Gamagori,” and she’d glanced briefly at you with a hint of a smile, “I do understand.” With that, she’d waved at you all and left the room.

Later on, when the two of you were alone, you’d hugged your boyfriend on an impulse. “That was *brilliant*, Gamagori-senpai!”

He’d hugged you back carefully then gently set you down. “Necessity is the mother of invention as they say, Mankanshoku.” Then with a hint of shame, he’d added: “The truth is I didn’t want to face Satsuki-sama down again.”

You’d smiled. “I know, senpai. It was sweet of you to do it just because I asked you to.”

“Like Satsuki-sama told me last night, Mankanshoku, some loves are more important than others.”

You’d kissed him then—and even three years later, it was still enough to knock him out. For such a strong, strong man, he could be so oddly weak, but that was one of things you loved about him most.

Two days had passed since your midnight tryst with your sister and neither of you had found another chance since then to be with each other again. In that remarkably short span of time, your sister had garnered a maddeningly relentless rabble of admirers—and they hounded her day *and* night.

In a way, none of it was surprising. After all, Satsuki had *always* been irresistible. Men and women had courted her, wooed her, and promised her everything that money, power and status could possibly obtain. Although she'd concealed the full extent of it from you, you'd caught glimpses of some the gifts she'd sent back: jewelry, watches, furs and bags; promises of love, declarations of lust, pledges of planes and palaces and villas and yachts.

The only thing that had kept the avalanche of admiration within manageable limits was the fact that Satsuki's loveliness also acted as a barrier of sorts. Men and women were awed by her beauty and intimidated by her aloofness—so the majority kept their distance and chose to worship her from afar.

All that changed, you'd discovered, when Satsuki became Soichiro. The same reserve that made your sister so daunting as a woman simply made her more alluring as a man. To your increasing annoyance, you'd found your sister constantly besieged by legions of women, swarms of them gathering whenever "Soichiro" appeared. Before, between and after shoots, Satsuki was surrounded by three or four female crew members, all of them giggling, and simpering, and tittering, and sashaying—

"Goodness, Matoi, the last time I saw you glaring murderously like that was when you were attempting to kill your mother."

"Stuff it, Sanageyama, or your skull's going to end up on Jakuzure's cap."

"Three years together and you still don't trust your sister?"

"I *trust* my sister implicitly. It's the horde of harlots around her that I don't trust."

"Satsuki-sama can easily manage a horde of harlots."

"Satsuki, yes. Soichiro, no. Look at her, for crying out loud! She turns into a goddamned gentleman when she's disguised as him."

"And who do you think she got that from?" the dark-haired man had simply drawled.

"Don't pin this on me," you'd grumbled, though you did feel the slightest bit mollified. Both of you watched your sister for a little while—and your mood promptly fouled again at Sanageyama's next remark:

"Iori was right," he'd mused. "For someone who's never romanced a girl before, Satsuki-sama really does know how to sweep them off their feet."

"Keep that up and I'm going to knock you off yours," you'd seethed.

"Fight fire with fire, Matoi. Your sister would never agree—subtlety's more her style—but why don't you go out there and give those harlots a run for their money?"

You'd scowled at him. "I'm not going to demean myself by running after some *boy*—"

A peal of laughter had cut you off and a silvery voice had floated over to where you and Sanageyama stood. "Soichiro-kun, you *naughty* man..."

For a moment, your world imploded in streaks of red. Then grinding your teeth, you'd turned on your heel and growled. "I am NOT sticking around for this. Just call me when the break's over, Sanageyama."

And with that, you'd stormed away. But not before hearing another bout of squeals.

Life could get quite infuriating with a sister like Kiryuin Satsuki.

### ~~~~~KIRYUIN SATSUKI~~~~~

For the n<sup>th</sup> time in two days, you found yourself frustrated in your efforts to speak privately with your sister. Just when Gamagori had hit on the brilliant solution of your asking Ryuko out, you'd suddenly found it impossible to go anywhere or do anything without a throng of women virtually hanging around your neck.

Although you'd been a genius at practically everything you'd done in life, fending off persistent hordes of admirers was proving to be surprisingly hard. You hadn't realized how much your aura of intimidation had shielded you until then, helping maintain a tenuous distance between you and rabid fans.

The shield didn't seem to work when you became Soichiro though. Now, women were literally tripping around your feet, offering you their meals, offering you their bodies, offering you their bodies *as* meals, and mouthing invitations from the deceptively subtle to the shockingly overt. Only years of practice with the sword had allowed you to somehow evade the calculated collisions of bodies against yours—a sixth sense warning you when someone was about to clutch a hand, an arm, a leg or your waist.

You did it all with impeccable gallantry of course. Three years of living with your sister had accustomed you to gentlemanly ways, for no matter how rough-and-tumble Ryuko had been in the early months of your re-acquaintance, she'd never failed to be chivalrous with you. She'd always been sweet in her insistence on helping you put on your helmet, never forgot to open doors, and *always* stayed on the side of incoming traffic when she crossed the street with you...

And it had been so, *so* long since you'd both crossed a street together—and just the thought of being able to take her hand once again in public, kiss her without bothering to hide, hold her without attempting to be furtive...you really, *really* had to find a way to speak to her in private.

Then you saw her standing with Sanageyama during one of the breaks in between shoots, and with as much courteous firmness as you could muster, managed to disengage yourself from the women who'd been giggling, simpering and tittering all around you.

By the time you'd reached Sanageyama though, your sister had disappeared.

"Soichiro-kun," your former subordinate had inclined his head towards you in greeting.

"Sanageyama," you'd nodded in reply. Then pitching your voice low, you'd asked. "Where did Ryuko go?"

"Somewhere far away from *that* 'madding crowd'," he'd replied, using the tilt of his head to indicate the swarm of women you'd just abandoned. "Somewhere," he'd added, "that I suggest you follow if you don't want to be at the receiving end of your sister's ire."

"Ryuko's upset?" you'd asked, one of your eyebrows raised in bewilderment. "What have I done?"

For an answer, he'd looked pointedly at the women who were now waving their arms madly at you. "Unfortunately, it's not even something you intentionally do, Soichiro-kun; which, even more unfortunately, doesn't exonerate you in your sister's eyes."

It only took a moment for you to realize what Sanageyama meant. Despite yourself, you'd cursed.

"Oh. *Fuck*. I am in *so* much trouble."

Sanageyama had looked at you with an expression of comradely affection. "That you are, my friend. I suggest you run after her now."

You'd nodded and turned on your heel. Before running after your sister though, you couldn't help saying out loud.

"I didn't know you to be a Thomas Hardy reader, Sanageyama."

He'd shrugged. "I've had to up my game since you started dressing like that. Otherwise, I'm going to find that my girlfriend's gone off and joined your harem."

You'd grinned. "I wouldn't worry about that, Sanageyama. Your girlfriend's the type who prefers to be on top." Then you'd sprinted away to find your sister.

Somewhere behind you, you could hear Sanageyama yelling his irate reply.

Life could get really complicated with a sister like Matoi Ryuko.





*[Image](#) of Nonon, Satsuki, Ryuko and Mako illustrated by artist [Mytyl](#).*

# Fallu de Peu

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

~~~~~MATOI RYUKO~~~~~

You'd known what she'd wanted to talk about the moment she'd rapped her knuckles on your door. To her credit, there wasn't the slightest hint of impatience in her voice.

"Ryuko, please open the door."

You'd been tempted to ignore her and let her pound away, but knew your sister wouldn't hesitate to use her snow white blade to gain access when it was denied.

"What do *you* want?" you'd asked coldly as you wrenched the door open—and immediately felt a pang of remorse when you saw the somber look on your sister's beautiful face.

(It was impossible for you to stay angry when you looked at that face—that face that always made you pause, that face whose aristocratic features you knew by heart.)

Dragging your eyes away, you'd pulled yourself together and spoken with a tinge of harshness in your voice. "So, did you get tired of all those women panting for your attention or did you just want to keep me on a leash?"

"Ryuko..." she'd spoken quietly, and the way she'd said your name had caused an entirely understandable constriction in your chest and throat. "If you're going to put me in the doghouse—to stay with your canine metaphors—at least do it for reasons that are actually true. I've been trying to find a chance to talk to you these last two days."

You'd stayed silent, unable to trust yourself to speak without a quaver in your voice.

"Ryuko..." she'd grasped your shoulders and drawn you towards her gently. "If there's anyone here who's on a leash, it's me—and I've been on it for the last three years." She'd put a hand under your chin and tilted your face up, and as always, you'd felt a vertiginous rush as you gazed into the mesmerizing depths of your sister's sapphire eyes. When she looked at you like that you could never resist.

You'd been on the verge of melting into her arms when—

"Soichiro-kuuun!!! So that's where you've been this whole time! We were wondering where you'd gone off to..."

In the brief moment that she'd turned away from you, and simply because she'd actually turned away from *you*, you'd frozen for an instant—then *fled*. You'd shoved her roughly aside and run out of your trailer, and not even the fact that you were wearing a kimono managed to

slow you down. You'd sprinted to the perimeter of the property, vaulted over the low fence that embroidered its edges, and ran in the direction that promised maximum obscurity. Five blocks later, a barricaded construction site materialized in your line of vision, and with a gasp that sounded suspiciously like a sob, you'd made a beeline for the spot almost immediately.

You'd slowed down as you neared the chain-link fence that surrounded the site and sized the barrier up. Although three years of living with your sister and two years of being under the limelight had permanently rubbed off your rough-and-tumble edges, some skills from your years as a delinquent came back quickly enough. You'd hitched the skirt of your kimono up to your knees (by sheer coincidence, your costume that day was a relatively informal set of robes), and with practiced ease, scaled the links and leapt lightly to the other side.

Then hitching your robes up even higher, you'd commenced climbing the bare bones of a building still under construction—the challenge presented by finding footholds on slippery steel giving you a welcome respite from your tumultuous thoughts.

Ten storeys later, you'd stopped ascending and settled down with your back against a girder. Your heart was hammering wildly with a rapidity that had nothing to do with your physical exertions. There was a strange twinge in your chest, similar in intensity to what you'd felt the day your mother ripped your beating heart out, only this time it hurt so much palpably more.

Because the fact was, you and Satsuki had almost never quarreled in the three years you'd been together. Part of it had to do with the perspective her nearly terminal illness had brought (after all, nearly losing the one you loved tended to make every source of annoyance seem a trifling irritation); part of it had to do with the fact that both of you understood and complemented each other in ways no one else possibly could; and part of it had to do with your long and frequent separations. The only time you'd ever *really* fought was back in the days when you hadn't known you were sisters, and even then the hatred you'd felt for her had been an impersonal thing, directed towards the regime she'd represented and the threat she'd posed.

So to feel...alienated from your sister now felt completely new and utterly disheartening. And although anger was an emotion more familiar to you than many others, you found it hard to hold on to your rage—partly because you knew, deep down, that your sister was actually blameless, and partly because the view of Kyoto beneath you reminded you of that night when you and Satsuki had watched Tokyo underneath your feet.

You remembered that night more vividly than you remembered most other milestones in your life. It was the first time you'd both gone on a real date, the first time you'd both ridden on a Ferris wheel—and the first time you'd made love. You recalled how she looked that night: how her chignon had highlighted the line of her neck, how her v-shaped neckline had revealed the swell of her breasts, and how her black satin dress had accentuated the curve of her hips...

She'd turned heads that night as you'd walked the streets, but all she'd cared about was the feel of your hand in hers. You'd been embarrassed when she'd declared the both of you as "girlfriends"—now you realized how much you wanted the simple candor of that declaration, how much you envied the unconscious and inconsequential gestures that passed between

lovers in the public sphere, and how much you hated the constraints that had been levied on your behavior.

And, as if thinking of her had been enough to conjure her presence, you'd heard her voice floating through the air:

"I have to say: getting up this high in so little time is quite impressive for someone who can barely walk in a kimono."

"How'd you know where to find me?" you'd asked her sullenly. The fact that she'd found you so quickly made it easy to lapse back into your anger.

"People notice when a beautiful woman runs by in a kimono. And as soon as I saw the construction site, you could say I had a hunch."

"And that impressive intuition of yours can't tell that I want to be left alone?" you'd asked sarcastically.

You'd heard her sigh behind you.

"Why are you so angry, Ryuko?" she'd asked quietly. The patience with which she'd asked the question and your knowledge of your own unfairness only made you angrier. Standing up, you'd whirled around to face your sister.

"I'm angry because...because...because you *promised* me that the world would never own you as much as I do! But I can't even talk to you the way *they* do, or touch you the way *they* do, or look at you the way *they* do. So what if I can see you more often now? I still can't tell the goddamned world you're mine!"

She'd closed her eyes then. "I hate this as much as you do, Ryuko. Why do you think I'm even trying this hare brained stunt?"

"Well, forgive *me* if everything I've seen these last two days doesn't convince me that you hate this as much as I do. You look like you're having a grand time basking in the adoration of your admirers, and for all *I* know, maybe that's the real reason *why* you took on this hare brained stunt—"

"Ryuko..." your sister had warned, a sudden ice in her cobalt blue eyes.

"There's your proof," you'd sneered, aware that you were fabricating things simply to inflict hurt, but unable to stop yourself because of the solace your rage provided. "The moment someone doesn't let you tramp all over them is the same moment you stop playing nice!"

"Ryuko..." she'd stepped towards you then, and despite yourself and your bravado, you'd involuntarily taken a step back.

Except, except, you'd stood far too close to the edge. And that tiny step back you'd taken was all you'd needed to move from solid footing to insubstantial space.

You'd watched your sister's eyes widen with uncharacteristic alarm and heard her voice tense with uncharacteristic fear, the "Ryuko!" that slipped from her lips the last thing you noticed as you plummeted to the ground ten storeys below.

Fuck, you'd thought at that moment as you'd closed your eyes. *Everything about this is SO going to hurt...*

And that was when you'd felt a familiar weight crash against your chest—and a familiar arm twine around your waist.

Opening your eyes in shock, you'd caught the gaze of eyes the same blue shade as yours, with irises as distinctly shaped as yours.

"Hang on," your sister had told you, a tiny smile on her perfect lips. Then still holding on to you as you'd both plunged free fall, she'd struck out with her snow white blade, the arc of her stroke graceful even in the midst of a potentially fatal flight. You'd heard the grate of steel being torn by steel—and the rip of tendons being rent from bone. Girder after girder gave way as sword sheared through skyscraper, and despite the battering and the buffeting—and the likelihood that her shoulder had left its socket—your sister's grip on your waist didn't loosen for a fraction of a second.

Endless moments later, you'd both finally screeched to a halt, a few scant meters all that remained between your feet and the ground. With a slight grimace, Satsuki had pulled her sword free of the twisted metal, and even as you'd both tumbled to the dirt, your sister had cushioned your fall by keeping her arm around your waist.

You'd almost burst into tears when she gazed at you with a look of pure concern, the first utterance to emerge from her lips the question: "Are you alright, Ryuko?"

"I'm *not* alright, you idiot!" You'd finally managed to choke back. "I'm not alright because *you're* not alright! That shoulder probably hurts like hell..."

"Not yet it doesn't," she'd wryly replied. "Adrenaline and endorphins and all that jazz. And now that we're finally alone and I finally have your undivided attention, I can ask what I've been trying to ask you for the last two days."

Then smiling a heart-stopping smile, she'd gone on to say:

"Will you go out with me, Ryuko?" After a beat, she'd clarified. "As Soichiro, I mean?"

For a moment, you'd had to stop and close your eyes because your throat and chest had understandably constricted. An internal battle of epic proportions played itself out in your head: guilt, regret, remorse and shame battling with tenderness, affection, love and desire. In the end, you'd simply decided to press your lips to hers—and the way she'd kissed you back contained all the absolution and forgiveness you'd been too afraid to ask.

It was only when you'd heard the distinctive snaps of at least half a dozen camera phones that you'd broken off the kiss and drawn back, startled to find a crowd of onlookers in a ring around you both. You'd frozen in that instant, realizing how scandalous and surreal the entire

thing looked: the straight and narrow Matoi Ryuko in the arms of a handsome stranger in the middle of a scene of utter devastation.

An image of your pink-haired manager flashed through your mind, and just like that, your bubble burst.

“Oh. *Fuck.*” You’d involuntarily moaned. “I am in *so* much trouble.”

Your sister had looked at you, a wry smile on her perfect lips. “Funny. I was thinking the exact the same thing.”

Even catastrophes seemed fun with a sister like Kiryuin Satsuki around.



[Image](#) of Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist [Kuguri Oimo](#).

Chapter End Notes

Sigh, I really enjoyed writing this chapter, LOL. For those of you who haven't had the chance yet to read the first story of this series, many of the events Ryuko recollects in this chapter (i.e., her first date with Satsuki, the promise Satsuki made, etc.) can all be found in Chapter 9 ([The Cording](#)) of [Le Fil Rouge du Destin](#).

Retrouvailles II

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

~~~~~INUMUTA HOUKA~~~~~

To your immense satisfaction, the pink-haired music executive actually had the grace to look contrite.

“And when exactly,” you’d grated, through clenched teeth, “were you going to tell me about this hare brained scheme?”

“It’s not like you to overreact, Inumuta,” she’d replied as blithely as she could, though you could hear the faintest trace of guilt in her voice. “I was going to tell you at some point, it’s just that things have been incredibly busy...”

“Things are going to get a LOT busier given the stunt your charge and Mankanshoku’s just pulled,” you’d replied harshly. “Apart from the fact that the media is having a field day with all the pictures circulating on social media, the construction company behind the site that Matoi blatantly trespassed and Satsuki-sama practically destroyed is threatening to file a lawsuit.” You’d been about to castigate her further when Iori entered the room.

“Ah, Inumuta, glad to see you’ve rejoined our merry lot.”

“How’s Satsuki-sama?” you’d asked the blonde researcher immediately.

"Apart from the fact that her right rotator cuff muscles are torn and her right shoulder is dislocated—magnificent as always."

"And Matoi?"

"Completely unharmed. My kimono—and her sister—took the brunt of the damage."

"What does the crew know?"

"Not much. We just told them that Soichiro-kun’s strained a few muscles here and there. Of course, Gamagori’s had his hands full trying to keep them at bay. They’re all rather eager to minister to the darling boy."

You’d nodded. "Good work, Iori. I’ve got enough on my hands to deal with; the last thing I need is the press trying to figure out how our lead male talent’s dislocated shoulder managed to heal overnight."

At that point, the lead “male” talent herself entered the room. She looked much paler than usual and had her right arm in a sling, but otherwise looked none the worse for wear. You’d

realized only when you'd seen her that you'd been far more worried than you'd thought—but the way she'd greeted you told you she was back in usual form.

“Ah, Inumuta. Here to clean up our mess, I assume.”

You'd pushed your glasses up the bridge of your nose to hide your relief. “I must say, Satsuki-sama, I would have expected idiocy of this scale from Jakuzure and Mankanshoku, but for you to have played along disappoints me rather severely. Honestly, what were you thinking???”

The whole room had gone quiet—even Gamagori and Sanageyama were waiting to hear her reply. You'd supposed in that moment that all of you were expecting a calculated response. In all the years you'd worked together, Kiryuin Satsuki had always had a carefully constructed reason for *everything* that she did.

She'd sunk into a chair first and gratefully accepted a cup of tea from Soroi. “I played along, Inumuta, because...” and she'd paused and taken a sip before continuing, “because it seemed like a fun idea at the time.”

All of you, except perhaps for Iori and Soroi, had gaped at her. “Fun...?” you'd repeated, feeling a massive headache coming on.

“Mmm.” She'd nodded, not looking the slightest bit contrite. “You've dealt with worse, Inumuta. I'll send you a dossier detailing the history of my male alter ego. Basically, I'm Mikisugi Soichiro: the long-lost half-brother of Mikisugi Aikuro who's come to join his older brother in the modeling profession. You already faked Mikisugi's public records three years ago—adding this ‘overlooked’ detail should be simple enough.”

You'd sighed. You had to admit that even when she was impulsive, she managed to keep her bases covered—at least when it didn't involve jumping off half-constructed skyscrapers to save her sister.

“As you wish, Satsuki-sama.”

She'd nodded then and finished her tea. As soon as she'd left the room though, you'd gone back to glaring at Jakuzure—only this time you'd also made sure to include Mankanshoku in your wrath.

“Whatever the bill for cleaning up this entire mess is going to be, it's coming out of *both* your budgets this year.”

Both of them had begun opening their mouths to protest, but you'd cut them off immediately by adding: “And consider yourselves lucky that I'm not even charging for *my* public relations services.”

You were sure they'd have screamed bloody murder if their boyfriends hadn't intervened at that point.

“That’s uncharacteristically generous of you, Houka-kun,” Sanageyama had smiled, one hand clamped on his girlfriend’s mouth while the other hand spun her around towards the door. “I’m sure I speak for my significant other here when I say we’ll take your kind offer.”

“Likewise, Inumuta,” Gamagori had rumbled, Mankanshoku already wrapped and bundled under a massive arm. And with as much poise as they could muster with two struggling girlfriends, your two former comrades had fled the room.

You and Iori had stood for a moment before the blonde researcher broke the sudden silence.

“Just like old times eh, Inumuta?” Iori had smiled at you.

You’d sighed and pinched the bridge of your nose. “Just like old times, indeed.”

Even if the world wasn’t ending, life was never boring with Kiryuin Satsuki around.

~~~~~KIRYUIN SATSUKI~~~~~

You’d known what she’d wanted to talk about the moment she’d rapped her knuckles on your door.

“Come in,” you’d called out, your attention focused on gently massaging and mobilizing your injured shoulder.

She’d come in hesitantly, a morose look on her otherwise beautiful face.

You’d smiled at her in gentle welcome and gestured towards the edge of your bed.

"It's not like you to be contrite, Ryuko."

She’d looked helplessly at your recently torn shoulder. "Well, it's not like you to be so beat up."

You’d shrugged. “I’ve been through worse.”

“That’s not the point! I hate having you suffer because of me...”

“You talk as if this has happened before.”

“It has happened before!” She’d looked away from you then. “All those years ago...if I hadn’t provoked you so much, you wouldn’t have had to fight so long in Junketsu...and you wouldn’t have gotten sick...”

You’d stared at her incredulously. “You blame yourself for that? And after all this time too?”

She'd continued to sit in remorseful silence. You'd sighed then and shaken your head. "I did my share of provocation then too, Ryuko. It wasn't your fault that I got sick."

"But what about today? You threw yourself after me! The thought of you getting hurt terrified me more than the thought of me hitting the ground..."

"There's little that can hurt me these days, Ryuko—at least not for long—and I have *you* to thank for that."

She'd responded with annoyance. "But that's exactly why *you* didn't have to catch *me*! With my Life Fibers, I wouldn't have died anyway."

You'd looked at her wryly. "That's not the first thing one thinks of when they see the love of their life plummeting to the ground. I reacted on instinct."

She'd been about to protest when what you'd said sank in. After a beat, she'd replied.

"The love of your life, huh?" Although she was doing her best to sound nonchalant, you could tell she was moved by the blush on her cheeks. She'd crawled over to where you lay on the bed and murmured. "Sanageyama was right. For someone who's never romanced a girl before, you really know how to sweep them off their feet..."

You'd smiled at her roguishly. "Is that why you keep falling out of the sky? This makes, what, two times in three years?"

She'd looked down at you with an eyebrow raised. "You make it sound like I'm starting a habit."

You'd reached up and twined a hand into her hair. "I have to admit, the idea has some appeal..." Then you'd brought her lips down to yours, and for an endless moment that felt much too short, the world faded away as it always did.

When she drew back, she'd looked at you somberly. "I really am sorry about your shoulder, Satsuki..."

You'd shaken your head firmly. "You went through so much more for me three years ago."

She'd snorted. "It's not a contest."

You'd smiled. "Call it an overly-developed sense of sibling rivalry." You'd run a thumb across her lips then and she'd promptly bitten the invading digit. You'd hissed as you felt the tip of her tongue lick the finger. "Kidding aside," you'd added seriously, "I'd do it all over again."

"I know," she'd replied wryly. "Which is why I'm definitely not making it a habit." Then suddenly looking uncharacteristically shy, she'd asked. "Am I...am I really the love of your life?"

You'd gazed at her for a long and endless moment, suddenly recalling another instance three years ago when you'd looked up at her as sunlight had framed her face. She'd looked so

strikingly and shockingly beautiful then, and that was the moment you'd realized you'd fallen in love.

You'd brushed a knuckle tenderly across her cheek. "You're not just the love of my life, Ryuko. You're the *only* love of my life, and you'll be the only one for as long as I draw breath, which thanks to you and the stunt you pulled three years ago, will be for a very, very long time—"

She'd cut you off by crushing her lips against yours, and this time, when the world faded (as it always did), neither of you were in any rush to bring it back.

And although you ended up mobilizing your shoulder far more vigorously than you should have, you had no problems with the joint for the rest of that night.



[Image](#) of Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist [♣3](#).

And finally...the whole cast and crew are reunited. This is going to be FUN. X-D For those of you who haven't had the chance to read the first story of this series yet, the incident where Satsuki recalls realizing that she's fallen in love with Ryuko is in Chapter 7 ([The Quilting](#)) of [*Le Fil Rouge du Destin*](#).

Divulcation

❧❧❧-----ARIANNE RENARDE-----❧❧❧

You didn't know which annoyed you more: the fact that the press had gotten premature wind of your game-changing project, or, the fact that Mikisugi Soichiro had made the moves on Ryuko before you had.

It had been absolute bedlam at the set the morning after the debacle at the construction site. You'd woken up to find pictures of Soichiro and Ryuko splashed across the entertainment sections of the nation's papers, the two leads locked in what appeared to be an alarmingly torrid embrace. The paparazzi had come out full force, of course, lured by the heady prospect of a triple scoop: (1) the straitlaced Matoi Ryuko caught in the arms of...(2) an enigmatic stranger while...(3) working on an undisclosed project with the legendary Arianne Renarde. Any of these angles would have been enough to monopolize the country's gossip tabloids for a week, and the media hounds were sniffing madly.

What had saved the day was the same giant of a man whom you'd blamed for your repeated failure to catch Ryuko alone. Gamagori-san had been ruthlessly effective in keeping both the journalists and the photographers at bay, and much as you detested his ability to interrupt you whenever you were about to pounce on Ryuko (it was uncanny, really), you'd nevertheless appreciated his skills in preserving whatever semblance of privacy your project still possessed.

You'd been tempted to throw a fit at the unplanned disclosure, of course, but Jakuzure-san had pre-empted you with the reassurance—delivered in an uncharacteristically serious tone—that “a COVER company always cleans up its messes.” True enough, a bespectacled young man who'd been introduced to you as the head of COVER Media had materialized out of nowhere and proposed a spin that would effectively turn a potential public relations sinkhole into a gold mine.

“I know this isn't how you normally promote your videos, Renarde-san,” Inumuta-san had said, a note of apology in his voice, “but if you let me handle things my way, this situation will work to your advantage.”

“And what exactly do you have in mind, Houka-kun?”

“We'll organize a press conference and tell the media that the construction site incident was a promotional stunt for Matoi-san's new album. Given how the pictures have gone viral on social media, the press will buy the story. We've already lost the element of surprise for this launch—we might as well use the situation to build anticipation and excitement.”

“It sounds promising,” you'd conceded, “except it also means I have to complete the shoot quickly if we're not to lose momentum.”

The blue-haired media executive had nodded. “Again, I know it’s not your style to rush your work, Renarde-san, but as you very well know, nothing about this project matches how any of its collaborators do things anyway.”

“Fair enough, Houka-kun. We’ll do things your way then.”

As soon as he’d left the room, you’d leaned back in your chair and lit a cigarette. While your recent setback on the professional front had been handled, you didn’t have a counter for the setback on the personal one just yet. Damn that Soichiro for throwing everyone off with his indiscriminating charm and then pouncing on Ryuko at the first available chance. Damn that Gamagori too for preventing you from using *your* charm and ruining *all* your available chances. You put the cigarette to your lips and inhaled deeply, the stick burning to half its length before you finally blew the smoke out.

After several long moments of concentrated thought, you’d stubbed your cigarette out and tapped a lengthy message on your mobile phone. Soichiro-kun may have made the first move on Ryuko-chan, but you were determined to make your move the last—even if it meant calling in a debt you’d rather have ignored.

Life was so much more interesting with the thrill of the chase.

~~~~~INUMUTA HOUKA~~~~~

Despite the fact that the event had been organized on such short notice, the room was ridiculously full.

You’d been expecting it though given the circumstances. For over two years, both you and Jakuzure had controlled all the public information about Matoi, with the result that the world knew next to nothing about the rock star despite her fame. Speculation about her private and romantic life had always run rampant due to the sheer dearth of material, and now, all of a sudden, pictures of her in a passionate embrace with an unknown man were spreading like wildfire across the Internet.

Putting that aside, there was also the fact that she was working with the legendary Arianne Renarde—a woman notorious in the industry for sleeping with her collaborators.

To say that the media was curious was understating the case rather severely. A few moments after you’d greeted the journalists and photographers assembled, Arianne Renarde entered the room, followed by Ryuko—with Soichiro appearing last.

You felt the current that galvanized the entire room when Satsuki-sama entered. No matter how many times you’d seen it in the last two years, her initial appearance always managed to take your—and everyone else’s—breath away, and even being disguised as a man did nothing at all to diminish her overall effect.

The buzz of whispers in the room had escalated as Soichiro made his way to the table up front, photographers leaping to their feet to capture the elegant frame and aristocratic features. The pictures that had been published the day before had obscured most of his face, so it was, quite literally, the first time the press were seeing him up close.

To say that the media was dazzled was, once again, understating the case. More than a few photographers stumbled when Soichiro flashed a smile in their direction.

You'd cursed involuntarily. At the rate Satsuki-sama was going, there was a chance that the entire conference was going to end up as a launch vehicle for Soichiro rather than Ryuko's album. Then you'd cleared your throat and tapped your mike, and just like that, the press conference had gotten underway.

The first question, thankfully, was addressed to Arianne Renarde.

"Renarde-san, the press kit says that this project with Matoi-san will be your most ambitious work to date, but also, strangely, the most restrained. Would you care to elaborate on the contradiction?"

She'd smiled. "I'm French, *mon chéri*, and few things are dearer to the French than elaborating on contradictions." The room had laughed at that, the ice immediately broken. "It's my most ambitious work to date because I'm directing an entire album as opposed to a single song. But it's also my most restrained project simply because I'm not going to make it as explicit as my previous work."

"But with all due respect, Renarde-san, your work is famous precisely because of its explicitness..."

"An unfortunate misunderstanding, I'm afraid. My work is not about the explicit—it's about the *erotic*. This project provides an excellent opportunity for me to make the distinction clear."

The next question was still addressed to the French director. "Does a single concept animate the entire album, Renarde-san? Or will each song express a different idea?"

"The entire album revolves around the idea of forbidden love. It tells the story of two lovers who meet each other time and again in different cultures and different eras, but are kept apart by circumstances in every single encounter."

"Doesn't that make for a rather depressing album, Renarde-san?"

"Like I said earlier, *ma chérie*, I'm French, and few things are dearer to the French than depressing stories of forbidden love." Again the entire room had laughed, and you had to admit that the director certainly possessed a charm of her own. "On a more serious note, the album focuses on the heroism of doomed love rather than its melancholy. People gravitate towards such stories, and that's why practically every country has its own tale of tragic romance."

Another reporter raised his hand. “Given the album’s premise and what you just said, Renarde-san, do you intend to be shooting the videos in locations all around the world?”

The Frenchwoman laughed. “Of course! We simply started in Japan because this is where Ryuko-chan came from, after all.”

“Have all the videos already been conceptualized, Renarde-san?” Another journalist inquired.

“Not all,” the filmmaker smiled. “I like leaving room for surprises.” After a beat, she’d added, “Why don’t you put this down in your reports? ‘Arianne Renarde invites all fans of Matoi Ryuko to send their suggested tales of doomed love.’ We’ll turn the best one into a video with full credit.”

One of your eyebrows had quirked up in surprise. It was just like the director to propose something so momentous without consulting the rest of the team. On the other hand, she’d weathered the surprise that life had just dealt her fairly well, so you supposed she was entitled to springing one of her own. Already, your mind had begun speculating on the media potential of launching a story writing competition among Matoi’s fans...

Another reporter had interrupted your reverie. “This question is for Matoi-san. Matoi-san, does this album represent a departure for you as well?”

The black-haired musician nodded. “Yes, it does. The songs demand a lot more texture, so I don’t use the guitar as exclusively in this album as I’ve done in previous albums. There are lots of songs where I use the piano, and although I can’t play it myself, also lots of songs where I use the violin. Overall, the music is just much more complex.”

A journalist at the back of the room had raised a hand. “Don’t you think it’s a little ambitious to stray from your signature sound so early in your career, Matoi-san? What if you end up alienating your fans?”

Matoi had hesitated briefly. “I wouldn’t call it ambitious...but I do admit it’s risky. It’s not so different from the kind of music I’ve always made, but the extent of the difference does put me out of my comfort zone.”

“Speaking of comfort zones, Matoi-san,” another reporter butted in, “isn’t collaborating with Renarde-san another stylistic departure for you? You’ve stood out in the industry so far by only shooting unplugged style music videos. What made you change your mind?”

The younger Kiryuin had paused for a bit, then replied gravely. “Honestly, my manager made me do it.” She waited for the chuckles in the room to die down before adding. “No, seriously, Jakuzure-san really made me do it.” Then she’d softened the statement with a grin. “Which isn’t to say that I’m not incredibly grateful for the opportunity to work with Renarde-san here.”

Another reporter waved his hand and you’d nodded at him. “This question is for Mikisugi-san. Mikisugi-san, it says in the press kit that you joined COVER Talent to follow in the footsteps of your half-brother, the world famous model Mikisugi Aikuro. How did you manage to land this prize assignment as your very first professional stint?”

“Only with the kindness of others,” your former mistress had murmured, and you could have sworn that half the females in the room had shivered at the sound of the husky voice. “The credit largely goes to my manager, Mankanshoku-san, and to Matoi-san’s manager, Jakuzure-san. If not for them,” and she’d looked at you from across the room with laughing eyes, “none of this would have happened.”

A journalist in the front row raised her pen. “It also says in the press kit, Mikisugi-san, that you trained for years as a swordsman. Is that why you do all your sword fighting scenes without a stunt double?”

“It’s partly to save costs,” she’d replied to the entire room’s merriment, “but it’s mostly to look cool.” You’d raised an eyebrow at her last statement in amusement—it had sounded like something her sister would have said.

“So did you also do the stunt at the construction site without a double?” the same journalist had pressed further.

“Yes, I did.” The smile she directed at the reporter made the woman’s cheeks flush.

“Didn’t it make you the slightest bit...anxious?” You could hear the breathlessness in the journalist’s voice and made a mental note to yourself to tell Satsuki-sama to dial down the charm.

“Leaping off the building didn’t make me anxious, but holding a beautiful rock star in my arms did.” Out of the corner of your eye, you’d watched Matoi turn beet red. Fortunately, the rest of the room was too mesmerized by Satsuki-sama to notice.

Another reporter waved an arm. “Didn’t you find the stunt odd, Mikisugi-san? Apart from the fact that you and Matoi-san were in full costume, it didn’t seem to have all that much to do with the video you’re shooting.”

“It may have been odd—but it was also certainly effective. After all,” and Soichiro shot the entire room a cheeky grin, “it got all of you to come here, didn’t it?” You’d nodded approvingly—by highlighting the newsworthiness of the event, Satsuki-sama had drawn attention away from its utter randomness.

“Just one last question for you, Mikisugi-san,” another journalist had called out, raising his hand. “Could you describe, with just one word, what’s it like to kiss the famous Matoi Ryuko?”

The whole room had gone quiet, and you’d watched your former mistress tilt her head to one side, a roguish smile lighting her lips. Then looking meaningfully across the table at her still-blushing sister, she’d drawled:

“If I had to use just one word, I’d say...addicting.”

And with the entire room in a titillated uproar, you’d drawn the press conference firmly to a close. “Thank you, everyone. That will be all for today.”

The excitement never ended with Kiryuin Satsuki around.



Mr. Mr.

[Image](#) of Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist [Emuro Gemini](#).

Chassé

~~~~~MATOI RYUKO~~~~~

It was close to midnight when you finally collapsed onto your bed, too exhausted to even change out of your clothes. Ever since the debacle at the construction site, Renarde-san had worked everyone doubly hard. With the premature exposure of her project's existence, it had become imperative to release the first video far earlier than planned.

You also suspected that the breakneck pace was a punishment of sorts.

"What the hell were you thinking???" she'd seethed when you and Satsuki had first returned to the set on the day of the incident.

"I'm sorry, Renarde-san..." Being the consummate actress that she was, your sister had managed to give a look that was contrite and charming all at the same time. "I guess I was trying to impress Ryuko-san here..."

"And what about you?" The Frenchwoman had asked, fixing you with an uncharacteristic glare.

"I guess I...wanted to be impressed?" It might have been the wrong response, as the director's lips had tightened further.

"I don't know what possessed the two of you to do something so utterly idiotic, but this is a mess that your managers will have to clean up. Now get out of my sight before I find another ten storey building to throw the both of you from!"

All in all, you'd reckoned that the consequences of your fit of jealousy had been mild enough. Renarde-san's anger had mellowed to a manageable irritability as the days had passed, and Inumuta's timely intervention with the press conference had turned a possible public relations nightmare into an image-building exposé. Sure, Renarde-san was working everyone to the ground, but that was a small enough price to pay—especially since it left the female members of the crew too fatigued to flirt as frequently with your sister.

The one thing you were holding on to was the break that you all had scheduled at the end of the week. You were looking forward to a chance to lock your sister up in a room and do things to her that would make even the jaded Arianne Renarde blush...

Then a set of knuckles had rapped on your door, and without waiting for your reply, your best friend had barreled into your room.

"It's late, Mako," you'd mumbled into the sheets, not even bothering to lift your head.

“I know, Ryuko-chan, but I thought I’d tell you in advance, just in case, you were, you know, making plans, not that you normally do, but one can never tell...”

The rambling nervousness in your closest friend’s voice made you look up. “Ok. Out with it.”

“Erm... You know that break we all have scheduled at the end of this week? Erm...the one that we’re all looking forward to since Renarde-sama started working us all to the ground because of that stunt you and Satsuki-sama pulled at the construction site the other day?”

“Yes, Mako,” you’d replied drily. “I’m well aware of the break you’re referring to.”

“Erm...I need your sister that day, Ryuko-chan. For a shoot. As Kiryuin Satsuki.”

You’d stiffened for a moment, then carefully peeled yourself off the bed. Then you’d fixed your best friend with a glare that would have impressed even your sister at her glowering best.

“You scheduled a shoot for my sister as Kiryuin Satsuki on the one day she gets a break from being Mikisugi Soichiro???”

“I’m sorry, Ryuko-chan...” your best friend had replied miserably, wringing her hands. “It’s just that I can’t hold Satsuki-sama’s clients off forever. She’s been gone long enough working on this video and Inumuta wants COVER Talent to pay for half the damages from the construction site...”

Your frustration had instantly transmuted itself into guilt. “I’m sorry, Mako...” Your best friend was right and you realized you were being selfish (again). “Satsuki’s putting her own career on hold to help me with mine...and all I can think about is—” You’d stopped yourself suddenly, your face turning red as images of you and Satsuki in a locked room filled your head. Then changing the subject abruptly, you’d added: “I need to catch up on my songwriting anyway. I still need about half a dozen more songs for this album, so I might as well use the break to work.”

At least that’s what you’d had planned when you stepped out of the inn on the day of your break with your guitar. Then you’d seen the red-haired figure leaning against the tree in the courtyard with its arms crossed against its chest and groaned inwardly.

“Ryuko-chan!” She’d started walking towards you with that familiar glint in her green eyes. “Don’t tell me you’re planning to work on your day off!”

Judging from the lilt of her voice and the sway of her hips, she’d apparently forgiven you for your indiscretion with Soichiro.

You’d wryly responded. “In case you’d forgotten, Renarde-san, you did tell me to throw out the songs I’d already written and to pen new ones for this album. I’m just following your orders.”

“Oh?” she’d raised an attractive eyebrow in amusement. “I never pegged you for the obedient type, Ryuko-chan. Are you just this submissive at work? Or...” and here the woman moved

even closer towards you, “are you equally submissive at *play*?”

You’d found yourself stepping back involuntarily and cursed inwardly. For all your skill in repulsing enemies on the battlefield, you never could turn your admirers away. It was a failing that had simultaneously amused and alarmed your sister, and you’d long ago suspected that she often sent Gamagori to act as your shield.

Only for some strange reason, the giant was suddenly nowhere to be found.

“My work is my play, Renarde-san,” you’d managed to respond without a quaver in your voice. “Which is why I don’t really mind working on my days off...”

“Ah, this is where we differ, Ryuko-chan,” the Frenchwoman had leaned into you, and you’d belatedly realized that she’d pressed you into a wall. “I think work and play belong to different spheres, although it’s entirely possible to make work distinctly...*pleasurable*.”

You had to admit that the woman was alluring, especially when her green eyes flashed like emeralds in the dark. “I’m sure it’s one of your many skills, Renarde-san...”

“Would you care for a private...*demonstration*, Ryuko-chan?” Her face was dangerously close to yours and one of her fingers had begun tracing the line of your collarbone.

“That won’t be necessary, Renarde-san,” you’d managed to breathe out in your mild panic. “I’ll take your word for it...”

“You’re far too trusting, Ryuko-chan...” she’d murmured down at you while shaking her head, “While it’s one of the things I love about you most, it’s also one of the things that causes me the most concern. You need someone to look after you and protect you—someone to keep the predators at bay, you might say.”

“Um, I don’t think it makes sense to give that job to another predator, Renarde-san...” you’d shivered when her thumb ran along the line of your jaw.

She’d looked at you in amusement. “*Au contraire*, Ryuko-chan, it takes a hunter to beat another hunter...and few hunters are as qualified as one who’s spent her entire life on the hunt...”

“But doesn’t the, uh, game end when the prey is caught?” you’d hedged in a play for time.

“Not when it’s a particularly *delectable* prey,” she’d growled into your ear, “and there are some prey that a predator can toy with *forever*.” This time you couldn’t suppress the tremor that shook your frame. “And speaking of delectation, I think it’s about time I’ve had a little taste...”

You’d steeled yourself as her face had descended, and right at the moment when you thought her lips would connect with yours, a shriek from the lobby caused her to draw back in alarm.

Both of you had looked instantly towards the source of the noise—out of the corner of your eye, you could see the irritation on the director’s face—but that was promptly forgotten, along with everything else, when you finally beheld the cause of the ruckus.

For out of the center of a rapidly growing circle of onlookers, a pair of glittering sapphire eyes met yours.

It was the first time you'd ever seen *her* dressed in a kimono (strangely enough), and the effect was simply and utterly *devastating*.

No predator on the planet, it seemed, would ever be a match for Kiryuin Satsuki. At least not when you were the prey.

For the first time since your career and Satsuki's had taken off, you and your sister had finally, publicly, come face to face.

~~~~~ARIANNE RENARDE~~~~~

Few things in your life had annoyed you as much as the disturbance that had suddenly prevented you from capturing Matoi Ryuko's lips with yours. It had taken quite a bit of scheming the last few days to finally get Gamagori-san out of the way, and now, a new interruption had abruptly arisen. You'd cursed involuntarily as you'd drawn back, and looked towards the lobby from where the ruckus had erupted.

What you'd seen standing there though had completely obliterated your irritation.

In the center of a growing crowd of onlookers was the most stunningly regal beauty you'd ever seen. It was a young woman dressed in a snow-white kimono, a few intricate coils of blue on the edges of her robe bringing out the luminous sapphire of her eyes. Sharply drawn eyebrows slanted over a patrician nose, while elegant cheekbones framed delicate lips. For a moment, you couldn't decide whether you wanted to ravish the woman or to worship her—the radiance that haloed her silhouette reminded you of images you'd seen of the Japanese goddess Amaterasu.

It took several moments before your brain finally resumed enough functionality to recognize the figure in the immaculate robes. "Isn't that... isn't that the supermodel Kiryuin Satsuki?"

Ryuko-chan had nodded mutely beside you, and judging from her expression, you'd surmised that the musician was as entranced as you were.

And as if saying her name had been enough to command her attention, the vision in white had begun to walk in your direction.

You'd bedded models, of course, and the ones you'd slept with had been a fairly haughty lot. So it had surprised you when the divine creature had approached you and Ryuko-chan with a gracious smile and greeted you both with an alluring tilt of her head.

Then she'd spoken in a melodiously deep voice. "Forgive my rudeness, but I couldn't help recognizing you, Arianne Renarde-san. I'm an admirer of your work." You'd felt an oddly familiar vertiginous rush as you looked into the lash-fringed depths of her sapphire eyes.

Then turning to Ryuko-chan beside you, she'd continued. "And of course, you must be the lovely Matoi Ryuko-san. I've followed you from the very beginning of your career, Matoi-san..."

"And I've followed you from the very beginning of yours, Kiryuin Satsuki-san." You weren't sure if you'd imagined it, but a strange look had passed between the rock star and the supermodel.

"Satsuki-sama!" A familiar voice had called out and Mankanshoku-san had suddenly materialized at Kiryuin-san's elbow. "The car's here so we should go."

Of course. You'd forgotten that the same agency that handled Soichiro-kun and Sanageyama-kun managed Kiryuin Satsuki as well. Although you'd met her for all of two minutes, you'd found yourself profoundly reluctant to part with the supermodel.

As if she'd read your mind, the blue-eyed beauty turned to you and asked:

"Would you both like to join me on the shoot? We're doing the launch campaign for a perfume called *Nostalgia* and we'll be visiting the major *koyo* sites of Kyoto. If you've never seen the city's fall foliage, it will be an excellent opportunity to view the best spots."

Then she'd hesitated and added. "Assuming you're both free, of course."

For a moment, you couldn't decide whether to pursue this unexpected opportunity or to continue where you'd left off with Ryuko-chan.

Then the musician had answered, an odd gleam in her cobalt blue eyes. "I was actually planning to work today, Kiryuin-san, but as Renarde-san here was just saying, there are ways of making work distinctly pleasurable—and viewing Kyoto's autumn leaves with one of the most beautiful women in the world sounds like a particularly good way."

You'd looked at the black-haired rock star in surprise. In all the weeks you'd worked with Matoi Ryuko, you'd never seen *this* side of the musician before. You couldn't decide whether to be annoyed or aroused by her unexpected flirtatiousness.

"Goodness, Matoi-san," the supermodel had replied, a small smile gracing her perfect lips. "If you're not careful, you just might sweep a woman off her feet. And you can call me Satsuki."

"Unfortunately, Satsuki-san, being careful isn't one of my virtues. And you can call me Ryuko."

"In that case, Ryuko-san, today promises to be *distinctly* pleasurable for me as well." Then turning to you with a dazzling smile, she'd asked. "Shall we go then, Renarde-san?"

And that was how, for the nth time in several weeks, your pursuit of Matoi Ryuko had been foiled yet again. But for some strange reason, you found it hard to dredge up the usual frustration.

The hunt was turning out to be considerably more interesting with a creature like Kiryuin Satsuki around.



[Image](#) of Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist [Nightkun](#).

Possessivité

~~~~~KIRYUIN SATSUKI~~~~~

You'd been far from thrilled when your manager had told you that you'd have to work on the one day you were free from being Soichiro-kun. And you'd been *so* looking forward to locking your little sister up in a room too and doing things to her that would have earned her the eternal enmity of your legions of fans.

But you'd put your clients off long enough, and even the mastermind behind an empire had to earn her keep.

Then Gamagori had phoned you asking for your permission to go on leave—apparently there had been some kind of emergency in his family's steelworks company and he needed a few days to sort the inexplicable mess out.

You'd suspected something immediately of course. Years of living with your mother had sharpened your ability to sense duplicity of any kind, but you'd merely told Gamagori “yes,” then paid a visit to Iori to make a special request.

“I need something exceptionally stunning, Iori—a kimono to bring out my best features, I would say.”

“Is there a specific objective you have in mind, Satsuki-sama?” You'd caught the gleam of amusement in his amber eyes.

“My clients haven't seen me in the last few weeks, Iori. In the unlikely event that they've decided I'm dispensable, I merely wish to remind them otherwise.”

“You could never be dispensable, Satsuki-sama, but a reminder is useful every now and then. Is there a particular effect that you're aiming for?”

You'd paused for a moment in consideration. “Purity, Iori; few things are as alluring as the untainted, I suppose. Make me look like a Japanese goddess; Amaterasu, comes to mind.”

“Laughably easy given your looks, Satsuki-sama. Consider it done.”

“Thank you, Iori.” The smile that had passed between you then meant that he'd fully understood.

As absurdly trivial a threat the French Fox was, you nevertheless gave her credit for actually making you exert an effort. Never in your life had you ever *tried* to look stunning, but if the objective was to draw an ardent admirer's attention away from your delectable little sister, then drastic measures were required.

Your plan didn't come without its risks though. Ryuko was generous in all things—bar the attentions of her sister; in this regard, you were family through and through.

But life was about risk, and you were used to weighing and choosing among necessary evils of various kinds. If incurring your sister's jealous wrath was the price you had to pay to save her from the clutches of a notorious womanizer, you were more than willing to pay the price.

Besides, you'd heard that makeup sex was a spectacularly sizzling affair, and you were keen to try its untested delights.

And that was how you'd found yourself inviting your sister's would-be seducer to the first shoot you'd had in weeks as Kiryuin Satsuki. Iori had outdone himself, and even you'd been taken aback by your reflection in the snow-white robes. As expected, Renarde-san's attentions had shifted easily enough—what you hadn't anticipated was Ryuko's reaction to how you looked.

She'd stared at you with a look of raw *hunger* on her face—and you'd belatedly realized that it was the *first time* both of you had encountered each other *as* each other in public since your careers had taken off.

The wave of arousal that had swept through your body then had nearly made you shudder. You'd taken a moment to compose yourself and when you'd glanced at your sister again you'd noticed that she'd done the same.

The only thing that betrayed her—to you, at least—was the gleam of possession in her azure eyes. And you knew exactly what those eyes were saying.

*Distract her if you need to; but remember that you belong to me.*

Later on, when you'd all arrived at the location of your first shoot, the crew had stared at Ryuko in slack-jawed wonder. They were used to trafficking with the world's most elite models, but rock stars still remained a breed apart. Your sister had graciously accepted their clamors for autographs and photos, and as you watched her interact with her fans from the sidelines, you realized how much she'd grown in the past two years.

She walked differently and talked differently now—all traces of the sullen, slouching and occasionally slovenly teenager completely gone. Two years of living in the limelight had rubbed off her rough-and-tumble edges, though streaks of her rebelliousness still surfaced in the way she played music and in the way she made love.

Most of the credit went to Jakuzure, of course. Your oldest friend was a genius when it came to the music business, and shortly after she'd taken Ryuko under her wing, she'd begun an image makeover that was as radical as it was necessary.

As expected, your sister had resisted tooth and claw. “What's the point of all this goddamned music training if I still need to strut around like a beauty queen to get people's attention?” she'd raged at your oldest friend in one argument from their earliest days.

“Don’t be stupid, Matoi,” Nonon had answered calmly. “In this day and age of *American Idol* and *Britain’s Got Talent*, even a hick from the boondocks can get their ten minutes of fame. You need more than talent if you want to be a rock star. Luckily for *you*, you’ve got the classic good looks of the Kiryuins, and much as I hate to admit it, even the charisma. Unluckily for *me*, you know squat about using either.”

The backhanded compliment had thrown your sister off enough to shut her up the rest of that day, and in the weeks that had ensued, you’d watched her and Nonon negotiate the terms and conditions of the makeover in predictably juvenile fashion.

“You can’t wear sneakers.”

“Fine. But I’m not wearing skirts.”

“You’ll have to ditch your hoodies.”

“If I do, then I’m ditching these heels.”

“Fat chance when you don’t have your sister’s height.”

“Last I checked, midget, neither do you.”

“You’re the one they need to see onstage, remember? Just wear the heels, Matoi.”

“Goddammit! Fine! At least make them boots!”

“Boots with stiletto heels then. And you’ll have to stop cussing too.”

“Are you *fucking* kidding me? What am I supposed to say half the time?”

“Something intelligent would be preferable, but if that’s too much to ask, just shut up and smile. Now get those sneakers off and wear the goddamned boots.”

As recalcitrant and reluctant as Ryuko had been in the beginning, Nonon had the advantage of having reality on her side. What had ultimately convinced your sister though had nothing to do with Nonon and everything to do with *you*.

She’d come home one day straight from rehearsals and you’d been stunned by the creature that had walked through the door. She’d left that morning in ratty sneakers and skinny jeans, her face and figured concealed by a baseball cap and an oversized shirt. She’d come back in black leather pants and black leather boots, the ensemble accentuating the curves of her hips and the lines of her legs. Black eyeliner ringed already dramatic eyes and unruly black hair had been styled into cascading waves. When she’d shrugged off the red leather jacket she’d come home with, her black halter top had lifted slightly to reveal a toned expanse of creamy skin.

She’d looked every bit the gorgeous and glamorous rock star she’d eventually become—and you’d never been more turned on in your life.

“Gaaaaad,” she’d moaned. “Jakuzure was *insufferable* today. She had me wear this whole get-up while rehear—”

She never got to finish her sentence because you’d grabbed a fistful of the scant material that covered her chest and threw her down onto your couch. Then pinning her down with your thighs, you’d taken your shirt off then quickly discarded your bra. Your sister’s eyes had widened at the unexpected turn of events—she was used to you being a foreplay kind of girl.

“Erm, Sats—“

You’d cut her off a second time by kissing her savagely and pressing her hands against your breasts. She’d quickly gotten the message, and while she’d busied her lips, tongue and hands with the heaving flesh on your considerable chest, you’d slipped your jeans and panties off then ground the liquid heat between your legs onto your sister’s bared midsection.

She’d growled then and sat up, one of her hands finding its way by sheer familiarity into the cleft between your legs. You’d locked your ankles behind her waist and ridden her hand furiously, aware that your sister was getting a spectacular view of you mounting her fully naked in the mirror on the far side of the room.

It hadn’t taken too long for you to come undone—with all her guitar-playing, Ryuko’s fingers had become exquisitely dexterous, to say the least. You’d collapsed on top of your sister with a barely-stifled scream, your senses shutting down in a post-orgasmic haze.

After a few minutes had passed, your sister had wryly spoken. “Please don’t tell me it was the boots. These heels are spiky enough to drill for oil.”

“It was the boots,” you’d confirmed languorously. “And the pants. And the top. And the jacket. And the makeup. And the hair.”

“And this whole time I thought you loved me just for me.”

“I do love you just for you. But I do also like this rock star get-up.”

“I can’t believe it: the high-and-mighty Kiryuin Satsuki turns out to be a groupie after all.”

“You don’t know the half of it. You’re lucky Nonon doesn’t let me attend your performances.”

“That’s just to keep my small base of fans in line. If you showed up, they’d start looking at *you* instead.” After a beat, she’d asked you slightly worriedly. “Do you really prefer me this way?”

“I prefer you every way. This is just a nice change of, hmm, pace.”

“No kidding. Even Lamborghinis don’t accelerate as fast.”

“Couldn’t help it.” You’d shifted on top of her and lowered your hips onto her face, gasping as her tongue flickered obediently over your well-slicked folds. “Let’s just say I’m a sucker for a great *ride*...”

She'd stuck her tongue in and *twirled* it around briefly before retracting it enough to ask. "Care to go around the block for another *spin* then?"

You'd reached behind you to tug at her blouse. "Only if you've got your top down."

She'd arched an eyebrow in mock disappointment. "Just the top?"

You'd gasped as her tongue slid in again. "Just for now. Let's milk those pants and those boots for all they're worth..."

And you'd milked those boots and those pants all right. Ryuko had come home every day that week similarly attired, and you'd fucked each other in every conceivable way on every manageable surface in classic groupie style. You still remembered the night she'd strapped a dildo to her waist and taken you from behind, and the memory of her pounding into you, your breasts heaving in her hands and the sounds of your moans alternating with the slap of flesh against flesh was still enough to make you wet.

Several days later, Nonon had rung you to say thanks. "I don't know what you said to convince her, but she's stopped wheedling about her change of wardrobe entirely."

"It was my pleasure," you'd told your oldest friend without a trace of your usual irony in your voice.

All the training and grooming had paid off handsomely of course. When the opportunity for superstardom arrived, Ryuko had hit the ground running and the world suddenly couldn't get enough of the mysterious, talented, gorgeous and well-mannered musician who'd come from out of nowhere.

It was around that time that you'd started sending Gamagori out to watch your sister. You'd always known, however, that the day would come though when you'd have to personally fend Ryuko's admirers off. At this point in your reveries, your sister had glanced up from among her admirers and you'd looked straight into eyes the same blue shade as yours.

It was the briefest of glances, but she'd known exactly what your eyes were saying.

*Indulge them if you need to; but remember that you belong to me.*

In this respect, and not in too many others, you were sisters through and through.





*[Image](#) of Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist [Magenta](#).*



# Séduction

~~~~~MATOI RYUKO~~~~~

You'd stared at your reflection, more than a little taken aback by what you were seeing in the mirror.

It was the first time (surprisingly enough) that you'd ever worn evening dress, and the vixen that looked back at you from the glass looked like nothing you'd ever perceived yourself to be.

For a few moments, you almost hadn't recognized yourself. In the entire history of transformations you'd undergone in the last three years, this was probably the most dramatic so far.

The scarlet off-shoulder number with the plunging neckline and matching stilettos had been in your closet for months—a relic from one of the few times that Jakuzure had lost an argument involving the clothes that you were supposed to wear. As disconcerting as it was to wear something so distinctly out of character, you had to admit that there was something extremely sexy about the sudden role reversal. By nature and temperament, you'd always assumed the masculine role in your relationship with Satsuki, but wearing a kimono over the last several days had given you a taste of the power that lay in feminine dress.

It was strange, really, that being so modestly and submissively garbed exercised such authoritative sway over men (and some women) alike. You'd often caught the male members of the crew looking at you askance—and had even found Sanageyama staring openly one time.

As always, however, it was your sister's (and only your sister's) reactions that made you reconsider how you were attired. You hadn't missed how Soichiro's eyes had raked over your robes time and again, and if Satsuki could get *that* keyed up over traditional dress, you were looking forward to discovering how much more excited she could get over a modern one—especially when it bared so much more *skin*.

Besides, you were eager to regain at least equal footing with your sister when you'd been so thoroughly under her spell for most of the day. You'd felt a curious mixture of dread and excitement when she'd approached you and Renarde-san that morning, and the impeccable timing of her arrival had convinced you that her sole intention had been to distract your would-be seducer.

You hadn't been able to decide then whether to be annoyed or aroused by the fact that she'd actually made an effort to dress up for the sake of *another* woman—even if it was ultimately for your behalf.

Then she'd invited you to join her on her shoot and your irritation had immediately disappeared. You'd never seen your sister at work before, and the prospect of flirting with her as Kiryuin Satsuki was vastly more thrilling than the experience of flirting with her as Mikisugi Soichiro—*especially* when you both had to pretend that you were strangers to each other.

As expected, Renarde-san had dominated the conversation during the ride to the shoot, but even the Frenchwoman was uncharacteristically flustered, the effect of your sister's proximity more pronounced in the closed confines of a car.

You'd found your fists clenching every time Satsuki had graced Renarde-san with a tilt of her head, or an arch of an eyebrow, or a smile on her lips. You'd long reconciled yourself to the fact that your sister regularly showcased herself to the world as a matter of course, but watching her do it for a woman who wasn't you was...trying, to say the least.

Fortunately, you'd arrived at the location quickly enough and your best friend—who'd sensed the subtle aggression emanating from you in waves—had taken Renarde-san hostage while clutching a guide book on the most famous *koyo* sites of Kyoto.

You'd almost felt sorry for the director in that moment—as persistent as the woman was, few people deserved exposure to the full extent of Mako's exuberance.

Then you'd found yourself walking alongside your sister while Mako dragged an unwilling Renarde-san a few meters ahead. It was actually a beautiful autumn day with blue skies and a crisp breeze, shafts of sunlight piercing through the canopies of the trees to dapple the reds and yellows on the ground with shade. You'd realized that it was the first time in over two years that you and Satsuki had walked together in daylight, and the urge to take your sister's hand in yours was overwhelming, to say the least.

After a few moments of silence, your sister had turned to you and asked with a gentle smile. "Are you enjoying the scenery, Ryuko-san?"

You'd looked at her askance, and you knew from the sudden flush on her cheeks that she'd felt the way your eyes had raked over her body. "I'm certainly enjoying the...view, Satsuki-san."

You weren't sure what her reply would have been if Renarde-san hadn't suddenly rejoined you, freed for a moment from your best friend's claustrophobic clutches. "Have you ever been to Kyoto before?" your sister had asked instead.

"A few times, yes, but just to perform. I've never had the chance to see the sights."

The French Fox had rolled her eyes. "That's because Ryuko-chan here only works and never plays."

"Not at all," you'd replied placidly, thoroughly ignoring the director's barbs. "I just don't enjoy sightseeing all that much."

"Because it's boring?" the red-haired woman had challenged.

“Because it’s superficial,” you’d replied. “When I see something...exquisite,” and you’d glanced at your sister briefly, “I’d prefer exploring it...thoroughly, as opposed to merely looking at it once.”

A small smile had graced your sister’s lips. “Have you had the chance to...explore lots of places then, Ryuko-san?”

“Not really, Satsuki-san... You could say I’ve already got a favorite haunt.”

“Ah. Then you must know its every nook and cranny.”

“Every single one, yes, but its enchantments never fade. If anything, its allure grows...more compelling over time.”

“Oh, you should take me there then, Ryuko-chan,” the director had smiled at you in invitation. “I’d love to explore something that sounds so positively captivating.”

You’d frozen briefly as an image of Renarde-san plumbing the most secret nooks and crannies of your sister’s body had flashed through your mind. Then a squeal had rung through the air and spared you from further contemplating images that were unwanted and unbidden.

“It’s Matoi Ryukooo!!!”

You hadn’t quite expected to be mobbed by the crew of your sister’s shoot—even after two years, the fact that you were *that* famous still took you by surprise. You’d cheerfully indulged their clamors for autographs and pictures until the photo art director called out that the shoot was about to start.

You’d spent the next few hours completely mesmerized, for it was the first time you’d ever seen Satsuki at work. You’d quickly realized why your sister was so highly valued in her field—she had an instinct for visual composition that allowed her to identify the precise location in the scene and the exact position of the body that would create the most arresting effect. For the most part, the art director and the photographer were simply content to follow her lead, her snow-white robes and milky white skin standing out vividly in a sea of red and orange and gold.

She was uncannily still when she posed, and there was something haunting and poignant about the way she carried herself when she didn’t move. Satsuki was, hands down, the most complicated person you’d ever met, and three years of living with her still left you feeling that you hadn’t quite plumbed her depths. She was only a year older than you, but she’d done more and endured more in her life than people four times her age, and you’d always supposed that it was the weight of her past that imbued her beauty with an almost tragic gravity. Although you were genetically more inhuman than Satsuki, your sister had always seemed far more otherworldly than you.

“She’s something else, isn’t she?” Renarde-san had asked with uncharacteristic seriousness as she’d settled herself next to you on the grass. You’d nodded and sat with her in strangely companionable silence, until the red-haired woman had added, “I almost pity the creature that

will manage to catch that one's eye—that terrible beauty of hers will either break their heart or crush their soul.” You'd started coughing violently at that point, only to hear the director add as a lazy afterthought: “But that's just me being depressingly French. Frankly, I'd trade my heart AND my soul for a chance to do things to that *exquisite* body.” Then she'd paused and looked at you.

“Not that I could, of course, when I've lost my heart and soul to *you*, Ryuko-chan.”

Despite yourself, you'd had to laugh. You had to admit that the woman possessed a charm of her own. “You're incorrigible, Renarde-san...”

“A most useful quality I assure you, Ryuko-chan, both at work *and* at play. Would you care for a private demonstration?”

“The public one will do, Renarde-san. Oh look, here comes Mako now.”

As your best friend dragged the hapless director away with some new inanity involving autumn leaves, you'd honestly wondered if Mako's loyalty to your sister had begun to outweigh her loyalty towards you.

When the shoot finally ended, it was late in the afternoon. Mako slipped you a note as the crew started packing, and you'd opened it to read:

Will you have dinner with me tonight?

The note had been signed by Soichiro-kun.

You'd just finished jamming the card into your back pocket when Satsuki and Renarde-san strolled over to where you stood. “Satsuki-san's offering to give us a ride back to the inn, Ryuko-chan,” the red-haired woman said, “unless you'd prefer to have dinner with me somewhere else instead...?”

You'd shaken your head, “My apologies, Renarde-san, I've already made plans for dinner.”

The director's eyebrows had shot up and she would have quizzed you then and there if Mako hadn't intervened with her impeccable timing once again. “The car's here, Satsuki-sama, so we should go.”

Back at the inn, Renarde-san had asked your sister, “Will we be seeing you around?”

Your sister had shaken her head regretfully. “Unfortunately, Renarde-san, today's shoot concludes my work in Kyoto.” Then, in what you could only suppose was flawless French, your sister had added: “*Peut-être que nos chemins se croiseront à nouveau un jour.*”

The Frenchwoman had smiled. “*Oui, je l'espère. Jusqu'à-là, au revoir.*”

You'd all parted ways then, and an hour later, you'd found yourself in front of the mirror applying carmine lipstick as a finishing touch.

“If your manager could see you now,” you’d spoken wryly at your reflection. “She’d either beg you to wear this outfit to your next concert or ask you if you were sick. Really, the things you do for love...”

Then with a final glance at the mirror, you’d reached for your clutch bag and drawn your shoulders back. It was time to find out if you’d learned anything from two years of strutting like a beauty queen on stage.

Dating was really quite complicated with a girlfriend like Kiryuin Satuski.



[Image](#) of Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist [Lux Lin](#).

Jeu de Rôle

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

~~~~~KIRYUIN SATSUKI~~~~~

You'd stared at her in consternation, wondering how on earth you were supposed to behave yourself at dinner when *she* looked ravishing enough to *eat*.

It was the first time you'd ever seen her in evening dress—the off-shoulder neckline revealed the swell of her breasts and the crimson silk fabric accentuated the curve of her hips.

For a few moments, you almost hadn't recognized your sister. In the entire history of transformations she'd undergone in the last three years, this was probably the most dramatic so far.

You'd wanted nothing more than to take her to the nearest horizontal surface and do things people normally didn't do on the first date. But you'd managed to act like a gentleman so far, and you wouldn't deny her the first dinner you'd have together in public since your careers had taken off.

She'd looked at you with some concern (you realized a moment after that you'd forgotten to breathe), and smiled a heart-stopping smile when you helped her get into the car. Although you almost never drove, you were a genius at practically everything you did, and you were glad for the ready proficiency that allowed you to steal glances at her every now and then.

She was utterly and devastatingly beautiful, and heads turned when you walked with her from the coupé. She had her hair in a chignon (it was the first time you'd seen it on her too) and something about the line of her neck and the curve of her jaw made it impossible for you to think.

To your relief, almost no one accosted you as you'd both walked from the car to the restaurant, though the looks of open admiration sent Ryuko's way were mixed with bewilderment every now and then. You'd quickly realized the cause behind the onlookers' confusion: although your sister's face was clearly recognizable, the way she'd dressed made her impossible to categorically identify.

Later when you'd both been seated at your table, you'd looked at her and murmured: "I could really get used to this look on you, Ryuko. I'm rather inclined to skip dinner and go straight to...dessert."

She'd arched an eyebrow and smiled. "Unfortunately for you, my darling, *I'm* rather inclined to take things slow. It's not often that I get to wrap myself up like an exquisite present. Some things in life are meant to be savored."

You'd chuckled at the sudden role reversal, even if it was at your expense. "If I end up tearing that slip of a dress off, it'll be your fault."

"You're doing no such thing," she'd told you half-reprovingly. "This happens to be an Alexander McQueen original, and Jakuzure spent a fortune just to get it."

"I didn't know you'd developed an interest in fashion."

"I haven't, really. I just happen to be interested in anything that involves *you*. And since we're on the subject..." and she'd taken a moment at that point to rake her eyes over the sharply tailored suit you'd worn, "it's absolutely criminal how you manage to look so beautiful whether you're a man or a woman, Satsuki."

You'd propped your chin on your hand as you'd gazed at her across the table. "And would you rather have me as a man or as a woman, Ryuko?"

A sultry smile played on her lips. "Oh, I'd like to have you in *all* the ways possible, sister dearest; several times in the same night, preferably."

The wave of arousal that had swept through your body then had made you growl in response. "Be careful what you ask for, little sister."

She'd leaned forward with a coy smile, offering you a tantalizing glimpse of her ill-concealed cleavage. "As I told you earlier this morning, being careful isn't one of my virtues."

You'd sat back and chuckled. "You know, for someone who's never seduced a man before, you really know how to wrap them around your little finger."

She'd looked at you with imperious self-assurance. "You don't always need practice to be perfect. I am Matoi Ryuko after all."

It had taken all of your prodigious willpower to endure the entirety of that dinner given all the provocations that Ryuko had continuously sent your way. You'd watched her play the role of a minx with an odd combination of admiration, amusement, arousal and awe. Apparently, two years of strutting on stage like a beauty queen had helped prepare her for other things besides performing—and the wine that you'd poured liberally into her glass throughout the evening had handled all the rest.

You'd watched in an agony of desire as she'd excused herself to go to the ladies room, entranced by the lines of legs made longer by stiletto heels and the sway of hips made curvier by clingy fabric.

Then when she'd come back to the table, she'd stopped briefly by your side and lowered her mouth to your ear.

"All this romancing's been really fun..." she'd drawled, and something about the lower register of her voice had ignited a liquid heat between your legs, "...but, Satsuki, I seriously need you to *fuck* me *now*."

You'd never driven so fast in your life.

You'd just managed to kick the hotel door shut behind you before picking your sister up and slamming her against the wall, your tongues battling in each other's mouths and your hands tangling in each other's hair. You'd restrained yourself enough to carefully peel her dress off—only to find a pair of scarlet thongs with matching thigh highs underneath.

You'd never been as turned on in your life as you'd been in that moment.

"I didn't know you'd developed an interest in designer lingerie," you'd stared at her with piercing eyes as you inserted a thumb into the cup of her matching bra. She'd shuddered as the finger grazed over a swollen nipple.

"I haven't, really," she'd replied in a shaky voice. "I just happen to be interested in anything that might possibly interest *you*."

You'd looked into eyes the same lust-hazed blue as yours. "This is going to get very, *very* rough..."

She managed to flash you a wicked smile. "Good. I really didn't want to have to *ask*..."

You'd silenced her then by covering her mouth with yours, and after an eternity that seemed much too short, drawn back to catch your breath. Then sliding down onto your knees, you'd used a finger to hook the scant fabric of her thong to the side, exposing the glistening flesh underneath. Then looking up into her azure eyes, you'd taken a long and leisurely lick of the cleft between her legs.

She'd gasped as a shudder shook her frame, one of her hands reaching out to grip the nearby door knob for support. Her other hand fisted itself into your hair and she pressed your face hard into her folds. You reached up and hooked one of her thighs onto your shoulder to give you better access to the wetness between her legs.

"Satsuki..." she'd whimpered, as her hips ground into your face, the flat edge of one stiletto heel digging into your back. You alternated between flicking at the hardened cluster of nerves at her very center and thrusting your tongue into her shaft. For a moment, you idly wondered if she was watching you eat her thoroughly in the mirrors that lined the room.

"Satsuki..." she'd moaned. "I'm going to...I'm going to..." You'd felt it more than you'd heard it in the way her hand trembled as she gripped your head.

"...come then," you'd murmured into her core, using that final movement of your lips to send her crashing over the edge.

You'd caught her as she collapsed limply with a barely stifled scream, and carried her to the couch in the middle of the room. Then while she rested and gathered her breath, you'd opened the valise that Soroi had left on your behalf and took out the toy that you'd had the foresight to have prepared.

It only took you a moment to unzip your pants and attach the dildo to the harness you'd already worn underneath your clothes. It was remarkably realistic—perhaps even more than you'd expected given how Ryuko had gasped when you'd turned around.

You held the phallus by its base as you walked over to where your sister lay.

“I don’t remember ever seeing it *that* size before,” she’d murmured with a hint of apprehension.

“That’s because we’ve never had it at this size before.”

“Given how slender your frame is, that can’t possibly be anatomically correct.”

“Think of it as a partial representation of the desire I bear for you.”

“Why just partial?”

“A total representation would require something significantly bigger.”

“While I’m flattered, Satsuki, I’m also frankly terrified.”

“I thought you wanted it rough.”

“Yes, but I also wanted it realistic.”

“This whole evening’s been a fantasy come to life for me; pardon me if I don’t give a damn about what’s realistic.”

“You’ve fantasized about me this way?”

“Oh *yes*...among many other ways.”

“Why didn’t you say anything?”

“Because I didn’t want you to think that I don’t love you just for you. Now, time to stop talking, little sister. I’ve been wanting *this* all day.”

You’d knelt down then and kissed her hard, her smell and taste still on your slightly swollen lips. Then you’d pulled back and turned her around deftly, bending her torso over the arm rest of the couch. You’d licked your lips at the sight she made with her well-shaped *derrière* sticking up in the air.

You’d leaned over her then and murmured softly into her ear, “First round was as a *woman*...” Then you’d swiftly pulled her thong halfway down her thighs. “Second round will be as a *man*.” With that, you’d spread the cheeks of her buttocks firmly apart—and rammed the cock in all the way to its base.

The cry that had escaped Ryuko’s lips then had nearly made you come.

As much as you loved burying your face between your sister’s legs, you had to admit that banging her from behind allowed for infinitely better visuals. You’d watched in the mirror as you’d pounded your sister from the rear, her nearly-naked body contrasting vividly with your fully-dressed form.

“Satsuki...” your sister had sobbed as you’d changed the angle of your thrusts again. “Oh God...oh God...Please don’t stop...” You’d gripped the fronts of her thighs for better control, but decided you could spare a hand to fondle her lace-covered breasts.

You’d barely managed to insert your fingers into her bra when she fell apart for the second time, her insides clenching so strongly that your hips jerked forward from behind. You’d waited a moment before pulling out slowly, then gently lay your sister on her back.

“*Fuck*, Satsuki ...” Ryuko had spoken raggedly, her breasts heaving from your recent labors. “You’re going to *kill* me if you keep this up.”

“But I haven’t had you in all the possible ways yet, sister dearest,” you’d murmured as you leaned down and planted a trail of kisses from her collarbone to her navel. Then sitting up, you’d released the dildo from its harness and gripped it in your hand. “Get ready now; third round will be as a woman *and* as a man.”

Then before she could protest, you’d pressed your face between her legs while thrusting the phallus into her shaft. For an eternity that seemed much too short, the only sounds in the room were your sister’s scandalously vociferous cries—and the slap of flesh being impaled by flesh. You’d lost count of the number of times she came before she finally hauled you up by your lapels with the last of her prodigious strength.

“For God’s sake, Satsuki, *stop*. I *need* to be able to walk tomorrow.”

You’d relented, but only because you’d wanted to memorize the way she’d looked at that very moment. With her languorous limbs and half-lidded eyes, she’d been the image of sex personified.

After a while, she’d murmured. “Was that you trying to teach me a lesson?”

You’d chuckled. “Not at all, my darling. Being careful may be a virtue, but it doesn’t make being careless a vice. That was just me trying to make up for lost time.”

She’d closed her eyes and murmured, “You were right. Role playing does make things more interesting in bed...” Then her eyes had opened and you’d watched her gaze rake over you again from head to toe. “God, you really do look criminally handsome...”

You’d paused, then asked her seriously. “Do you prefer me when I’m this way?”

In answer, she’d reached up and pulled your hairpiece off, and your long black hair had tumbled in waves around your shoulders.

“As sexy as all this cross-dressing’s been, I really wouldn’t have you any other way, Satsuki.” Then she’d pulled you down and brought your lips to hers. Then without a sign of strain or a word of warning, she’d flipped you over (head under feet) and promptly knocked the breath out of you for the nth time in under three hours.

“Having said that,” she’d smiled as she’d straddled your waist and started unbuttoning your shirt. “There is something incredibly erotic about having you as a woman while you’re

dressed as a man...” Then she’d unfastened the clasp behind your back and smiled wickedly as your breasts came free. “I think I want everything off now,” she’d murmured, “*except* for the shirt and tie.”

“Oh?” you’d teased as you’d arched your breasts into her hands. “I’d have thought you’d use my tie to bind my wrists tonight.”

“That’s what I thought too, but I like seeing it where it is,” she’d replied, openly admiring your breasts. “Which means...” and your breath had hitched as she’d slowly and seductively begun to strip her crimson bra off, “that I’ll have to make do with the few materials *I* happen to have...”

Then as she’d pressed you down into the carpet, she’d drawled:

“Now remember, Satsuki, do *try* to keep up with your juniors.”

For the nth time in several months, you were grateful for the endurance granted by extraterrestrial genes.





[Image](#) of Ryuko and Satsuki illustrated by artist [Recording](#).

Chapter End Notes

This chapter draws heavily from the entire history of intimacy detailed between Satsuki and Ryuko in this series so far: from their first kiss in Chapter 8 of [Le Fil Rouge du Destin](#) (**[The Knotting](#)**), to their first date in Chapter 9 (**[The Cording](#)**), to the first time they make love in Chapter 10 (**[The Tying](#)**), to the other encounters mentioned in Chapter 3 (**[Arrêt sur Image](#)**), Chapter 6 (**[Ménage à Trois](#)**), Chapter 11 (**[Rendez-Vous](#)**), Chapter 16 (**[Chassé](#)**) and Chapter 17 (**[Possessivité](#)**) of the current story. Which simply means that the dialogue gets much sexier (and more meaningful!) if you happen to recall those earlier encounters.

Roues Tournant

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

~~~~~INUMUTA HOUKA~~~~~

“Why do I get the feeling that you haven’t moved from that spot since last night?”

You’d glanced up from your laptop to find Arianne Renarde looking at you with wry amusement, one hand sporting a mug of coffee—the other hand offering you a second mug.

You’d been slightly taken aback by the unexpected kindness, and gratefully accepted the proffered beverage. “I hope it’s not an impression created by any shabbiness on my part.”

“Not at all. You’re dressed as impeccably as ever, Houka-kun. It’s just that you’re dressed the exact same way as yesterday.”

“Ah yes, the disadvantages of no longer being in uniform,” you’d taken a moment to shut a program down, then turned around in your chair to face her fully. “It’s just as well that you’re here, Renarde-san; congratulations are in order after all. Last midnight, you gained the distinction of having directed the video that’s garnered the most number of YouTube hits in a single day: a whopping 41 million views.”

The Frenchwoman perched herself on the edge of the table. “That sounds fairly impressive, Houka-kun, only I believe those statistics have far more to do with your timely media interventions than my actual directorial efforts.”

You’d raised an eyebrow. “You’re being uncharacteristically modest, Renarde-san. To paraphrase a popular cliché, I can only fan smoke when there’s an actual fire. It’s a beautiful piece of work.”

“I’m glad you think so,” the director had paused to take sip from her mug. “We’ll find out soon enough when the next awards season begins.”

“Or not,” you’d shrugged. “After all, those awards can be determined by timely media interventions just as much as actual directorial efforts.”

“Touché, Houka-kun. Let’s hope things get settled on purely artistic merit then.”

You’d waited for her to finish taking another sip before asking: “Have you decided on the location of the next shoot?”

The red-haired woman smiled. “Paris. The video will revolve around the story of Abelard and Héloïse.”

“An interesting choice,” you’d mused. “So you’ll be focusing on an illicit romance between a theologian and a nun just when Christmas is around the corner?”

“Not just a nun, but an abbess,” the red-haired woman had quickly corrected you, “And she became both *after* the affair. As for the timing, let’s just say controversy is still a form of publicity—as you very well know from your timely media interventions, Houka-kun.”

You’d chuckled. “And here I was hoping you’d go by artistic merit.”

“*Bien sûr*. I’ll be in my homeland after all, and a Frenchwoman telling a French story on French soil can *only* be extravagantly artistic.”

“I look forward to it then, Renarde-san.”

“As do I, Houka-kun, for reasons professional *and* personal.”

The Frenchwoman had waved her goodbye then, the meaning of her parting words abundantly clear to you when they would have been opaque to others.

After all, you’d known about her “personal” interest in Matoi Ryuko since she’d run an investigation on the musician two years ago. Not a single unusual inquiry or search could be conducted on either Kiryuin sister without you knowing about it, and it hadn’t come to you as a surprise when the Frenchwoman had sent a proposal to Jakuzure soon after.

What had surprised you though was the fact that the pink-haired music executive had actually declined the director given her legendary status. In the end, it seemed that Matoi had managed to win her manager’s grudging affections after all—at least enough to have her wishes about her art respected.

At any rate, you *highly* doubted that the red-haired woman’s personal intentions would be fulfilled to the same degree as her professional ones. After all, even a French seductress making her moves during the most romantic season of the year in the most romantic city in the world would still be no match for Kiryuin Satsuki.

Especially when Matoi Ryuko was involved.

~~~~~MANKANSHOKU MAKO~~~~~

It had taken years of painstaking and patient work, but last night, on your first evening off in weeks, Gamagori-senpai had finally managed to get to second base with you before predictably passing out.

Although you were exceedingly aware of the fact that your friends—notably Jakuzure-senpai, Sanageyama-senpai, Satsuki-sama and Ryuko-chan—tended to hit home runs left and right (and usually several times in the same night—you could tell by the condition they were in the next day), you’d never found it a cause of envy. You were always happy when your friends

were happy, and if your virginity remained almost disturbingly intact after three years, that was just how the cherry popped (or didn't, rather).

On the other hand...a girl had needs too, and after your boyfriend had pitched unconscious into the heaving bosom he'd been so delightfully manhandling less than a minute ago, you'd nearly screamed in frustration.

Which was why you'd been ill-prepared to handle the complete and utter bedlam that greeted you in the office the next day.

"Mankanshoku-san!" your executive assistant had practically thrown himself at you when you'd arrived, a look of relief on his face. "The phones have been ringing non-stop since this morning and the emails have been flooding in! We've got everyone in admin just managing the calls and inquiries, but we need an official answer soon—"

"An official answer to *what* exactly, Tatsumi-kun?" you'd cut him off with uncharacteristic sharpness.

"To requests for Soichiro-kun's services, Mankanshoku-san. Ever since the release of Matoi-san's new music video yesterday, the requests have been pouring in! They want Soichiro-kun for everything: commercials, endorsements, gigs, movies...the works!"

You'd stopped in your tracks as a swell of dread slammed into you like a tidal wave.

You had *not* expected this scenario.

And neither, probably, had Jakuzure-senpai.

"So, can we say yes?" your assistant had looked at you hopefully.

"Of course not!" you'd hissed, and the poor man had drawn back in surprise.

"But, but, why not, Mankanshoku-san?" he'd asked in bewilderment. "Even Sanageyama-san didn't get this volume of requests back when he debuted...and we said yes to everything!"

You'd paused for a moment, paralyzed by your inability to lie. "It's...it's...it's complicated, Tatsumi-kun. Give me at least half a day and I'll have your official answer ready."

Without waiting for a reply, you'd walked into your office and slammed the door shut.

There was *no* effing way Soichiro-kun could accept additional assignments—not when Satsuki-sama had a schedule as packed as Tokyo's Keihin Tohoku line from Ueno to Okachimachi during rush hour.

With a sigh, you'd picked up your mobile phone and dialed a number. You fervently hoped your charm would work for this particular request.

"Inumuta-senpai? Can I ask you a really, really big favor?"

"The initial data from Matoi-san's Madison Square Garden concert looks extremely promising. It appears certain frequencies inhibit Life Fiber synchronization while other frequencies intensify it...."

You'd trailed off when you realized that the media executive across the table looked uncharacteristically preoccupied.

"You seem distracted, Inumuta-san."

The blue-haired youth had looked briefly startled, then had flashed you a rueful smile.

"My sincerest apologies, Hoomaru-san, there's been a bit of an...emergency with COVER Talent."

You'd raised a purple eyebrow in response. "I've been away on sabbatical the last several weeks, Inumuta-san, so I'm afraid you'll have to enlighten me."

The media executive had paused for a moment as if considering what to say, then had simply sighed and flashed an image on the wall-mounted projector screen.

You'd only glanced at the photo briefly before your eyes had involuntarily widened. Then you'd frowned.

"Ragyo-sama was a woman of many secrets, Inumuta-san, but I'm absolutely certain she never sired a son..."

Then your voice had trailed off as a bizarre thought had occurred to you.

"Yes, it's *her*," Inumuta-san had confirmed while pinching the bridge of his nose.

You'd nodded your head, admiration plainly etched on your face. "She's just as devastating as a man as she is as a woman, I see. And what, pray tell, is this exactly?"

The media executive had muttered darkly: "The result of an utterly imbecilic ploy by concerned but idiotic friends." When you continued to look at him questioningly, he'd added. "Mankanshoku and Jakuzure thought it was a good way to bring Matoi and Satsuki-sama together in public."

You had to admit that there was a kind of frenzied brilliance behind the idea's lunacy. "And Satsuki-sama actually agreed...?"

The blue-haired youth had sighed. "As logical and rational as Satsuki-sama is, she can be... exceedingly illogical and irrational when it comes to her sister."

"Indeed," you'd murmured, glancing at the photo on the screen. It was reassuring, in a way, to see that the firstborn child of Kiryuin Ragyo was human after all. "So what exactly is the

emergency?”

“Mankanshoku rang me an hour ago. It seems that the volume of requests for Soichiro-kun’s services is getting frankly unmanageable—and that’s just one day after his launch as a talent on a music video. Although media management is one of my many specialties, I’m hard pressed to come up with a good reason for why an up-and-coming model would refuse all the requests generated by his debut.”

“I gather Satsuki-sama simply doesn’t have the time?”

Inumuta-san had nodded. “As it is, the time she spends as Mikisugi Soichiro actually *costs* COVER Talent money. A model of her caliber and stature would earn significantly more on the ramp than on the screen.”

You’d leaned back in your chair and tapped your chin thoughtfully. After several long moments, you’d ventured out loud:

"What if Soichiro-kun signs an exclusivity contract with COVER Fashion?"

For a moment, the media executive had looked at you with startled and newly-heightened respect. As expected, he’d grasped the implications of your proposal almost immediately. "It's rare for a talent so new to score an exclusivity contract so soon..."

"But it's not entirely unprecedented," you’d countered smoothly. "As ironic as it seems to us both, COVER Fashion has never actually been able to afford the services of Kiryuin Satsuki—at least not at this stage in its growth. But, we *can* afford an exclusivity contract with a talent that's new. With Soichiro-kun under COVER Fashion, Mankanshoku-san will be able to refuse all other requests *and* you’ll have a much easier time keeping things under wraps."

"It's an elegant solution," the blue-haired youth had admitted, and you knew the statement was high praise coming from him. "It actually turns this entire debacle into an asset for the conglomerate. COVER Fashion gets a supermodel at a fraction of the cost, COVER Talent gets to hold off unwanted bids and COVER Media gets to manage a potentially scandalous situation."

“Exactly, Inumuta-san,” you’d nodded. “However...I do have a condition attached to this proposal.”

“Oh?” the media executive had raised an eyebrow. “And what would that condition be, Hoomaru-san?”

You’d smiled craftily.

It looked like COVER Fashion was going to end the year with a spectacular bang.

“Why the bloody *hell* does my charge have to be part of this deal???” you’d yelled with characteristic fury. “Ryuko’s got enough on her hands with half a dozen songs left to write and another shoot scheduled in a few days!”

“There, there, Jakuzure-san,” the purple-haired head of COVER Fashion had held her hands up placatingly. “It’s not like Matoi-san isn’t going to benefit from this arrangement. Publicity *is* publicity, and a fashion campaign can help make her media snowball even bigger.”

“Any bigger and it might bury us entirely,” you’d muttered. “All this coverage is grand, but if it doesn’t even leave Ryuko enough time to write her music, then there’ll be nothing to cover in the long run. Besides, Ryuko doesn’t know squat about modeling!”

“You put too little faith in your charge’s abilities, Jakuzure-san—and give too little credit to yours,” the dark-skinned woman had smiled soothingly. “After all, you did manage to teach Ryuko how to strut like a beauty queen onstage.”

You’d gritted your teeth at the crafty compliment. “Flattery will get you nowhere, Hoomaru-san.”

“Flattery, no, but facts, yes. After all, doesn’t COVER Music need extra money to cover an unbudgeted construction bill?”

You’d shot daggers at the woman. “*Fine*,” you’d seethed. “But all you’ll get is *one* day.”

The fashion executive had smiled. “That’ll be more than enough, Jakuzure-san. After all,” she’d added on her way out, “a day *does* have 24 hours.”

“Aaaaaaaaaaaaaarrggghhh!” you’d groaned in frustration after the purple-haired woman had left.

Life could be quite infuriating with the former minion of Kiryuin Ragyo around.



Image of Ryuko and Satsuki illustrated by artist ZIS.

Chapter End Notes

This chapter was sooo much fun to write! And with Hoomaru Rei finally onboard, we've got almost the entire cast from the series assembled. Now if only I can find a suitable role for Tsumugi Kinagase...mwehehehe.

Prêt-à-Porter

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

~~~~~SANAGEYAMA UZU~~~~~

It wasn't exactly how you'd wanted to spend one of your few days off, but it was almost worth it given the unparalleled opportunity it provided to watch Matoi Ryuko squirm.

Unlike her older sister, grace did not come naturally to the younger Kiryuin. It had taken your girlfriend several months of doggedly persistent and frequently hostile effort to retrain the musician's habitual ways of talking, walking and carrying herself. However, a world of difference still remained between strutting around onstage and posing in front of a fashion photographer's lens—and the difference was something the musician clearly felt.

You were shaking your head in amusement and sympathy when you heard a familiar voice pipe up somewhere to your left.

"For someone who moves like a black panther on the battlefield, Matoi-sama has all the grace of an inebriated penguin everywhere else. But then again, she *did* manage to learn how to walk properly onstage. Eventually." You'd looked at the man who'd materialized by your side with surprise. "Iori??? What brings you here?"

He'd looked at you with an eyebrow raised. "Who else do you think does our dear Soichiro-kun's clothes? Cross-dressing attire isn't exactly ready-to-wear. In any case, I could ask you the same thing. What are *you* doing here when you're supposed to be on break?"

You'd sighed. "Inumuta wanted me to keep Nonon in line."

Iori raised an eyebrow again. "And he asked *you*? That's putting too much faith in your abilities, isn't it?"

"It was an act of desperation. At the very least, he figured Nonon wouldn't kill me. Not that she hasn't tried. She's been terrorizing the crew all morning."

"Speaking of the stage mother," the blonde researcher nodded, "here she comes now."

Both of you watched as your girlfriend stomped over to where Matoi's face was being done up and started screaming at her charge's makeup artist with characteristic fury: "What the hell do you think you're doing? A *mural*??? You're supposed to be *bringing out* her features for God's sake, not *painting over* them!" Neither of you missed the look of pained embarrassment on Matoi's face nor the look of secret amusement on Satsuki-sama's.

After a moment, Iori ventured: "I think it's rather sweet how your girlfriend bulldozes anyone who doesn't do right by her charge."

You'd drawled. "She's just territorial. She considers it her exclusive right to abuse Matoi."

"Ah." Iori paused. "Tough love."

You'd nodded solemnly. "Yes. The genuine, leather beaten variety."

The blonde researcher looked at you with amusement. "You sound like you speak from experience."

You'd replied wryly. "Let's just say she perfected the style with me."

Two hours later, you and Iori had found yourselves slumping in your stools. The shoot had been proceeding at a frustratingly agonizing pace—mostly because Matoi (understandably enough) had been stiff as a board all morning and visibly struggling to follow the photographer's instructions.

"Look at Soichiro-kun with bedroom eyes. *Bedroom eyes*, Matoi-san. No, squinting doesn't work."

"Let's try poutier lips. You know, like you're about to kiss someone? No, not like a goldfish, Matoi-san."

"I need a sexier look on your face, Matoi-san. No, that's not it, you just look pissed off."

"Could you drop your left shoulder a little bit more, Matoi-san? Ok, not that much. Think seduction, not scoliosis."

You'd watched from the sidelines as your girlfriend had come to her charge's defense *yet* again when the photographer had called for another break. "She's not a model, dammit! And even when she shoots videos, she has her music to help her get into the role!"

At that moment, you'd watched Satsuki-sama peel herself away from the wall where she'd been resting casually as Soichiro-kun.

"Perhaps I may be of some assistance," you'd heard her murmur to the photographer and the nearby crew. "As Jakuzure-san has rightfully pointed out, Matoi-san *is* new to modeling." Then she'd walked over to where her sister had been standing and looking at the floor in dejected frustration. "Ryuko-san?" Matoi had looked up in gloomy preoccupation, "Yes, Sat—I mean, Soichiro-san?"

Satsuki-sama had simply looked at her sister for a long moment with an unreadable expression on her face. Then without any warning, she'd reached for Matoi and covered the musician's lips with *hers*.

In the three years that Satsuki-sama and Matoi had been together, neither you nor the rest of the Divas had actually seen them kiss. Both sisters shared a reticence for public displays of affection and the most you'd ever seen was an occasional peck on the cheek. You'd decided (several moments later) that the lack of exposure was probably best as watching the Kiryuin sisters *kiss* was decidedly hazardous for mental health.

It was, quite frankly, one of most *erotic* things you'd ever seen. You—and the rest of the room—had watched stunned as Soichiro's mouth had slanted repeatedly over Matoi's, one hand curving possessively over the musician's rear while the other hand firmly cupped the back of her head. At first, Matoi had stiffened in shock, but it hadn't taken long before she'd responded to the kiss, one arm dangling limply by her side while the other arm had secured a vise-like grip around her sister's neck. You'd watched Satsuki-sama finally break off the kiss, releasing Matoi's swollen bottom lip with agonizing slowness.

Matoi had looked up at her sister in an (understandably) uncomprehending haze and your sharp eyes had noted the matching degree of dilation in Satsuki-sama's pupils. She'd smiled down at her sister and steadied her on her feet before gently pulling away. Then she'd looked at the photographer—who'd been watching the entire thing slack-jawed—and murmured: "Perhaps we should try again now, Araki-san?"

The first one to emerge from the collective haze though was not the photographer but your girlfriend.

"What the bloody *hell* did you just do Mikisugi???" Nonon had yelled with characteristic fury. "You try that damned stunt again and I'm going to sue what's left of you for sexual harassment *after* I pitch you off another ten storey building!"

You'd watched Satsuki-sama cheerfully put a dazed Ryuko between herself and the irate music executive, both hands held up in a gesture of apology: "*Gomenasai*, Jakuzure-san. But I do believe it's sexual harassment *only* if the gesture is unwelcome..."

You'd chuckled and turned to Iori—only to find the blonde researcher scribbling furiously. You'd quickly glanced at what he'd written and just managed to make out the phrases "grip rear," "hold on tight to back of head" and "suck bottom lip."

"You took *notes*???"

The couturier nodded unabashedly. "Never pass up an opportunity to learn from a master, is what I always say."

"Good man," you'd nodded. "Email them to me, will you?"

Although your girlfriend had screamed at Satsuki-sama for another five minutes, your former mistress's strategy had worked with spectacular success. Matoi was the very embodiment of effortless eroticism for the remainder of the morning and the amount of eye sex she'd traded with her sister for a good two hours had bordered on outright pornography.

It was so bad that when the photographer finally called a break for lunch, nearly all the men present had made a beeline for the restroom.

Unfortunately, it appeared that even the effects of Satsuki-sama's kisses could expire, as Matoi was back to being stiff and uncomfortable after lunch. You and all the men in the room had looked hopefully at Soichiro-kun, hoping for a repeat of the morning's performance, but the murderous glare Nonon had shot all around had quickly quelled any voyeuristic hopes.

It took an hour of little to no progress before Matoi decided to take matters into her own hands. At the next break, you and Iori had watched with interest as the black-haired musician had slowly approached her sister. “Soichiro-san?”

“Yes, Ryuko-san?”

Matoi had simply looked at her sister for a long moment with an unreadable expression on her face. Then without any warning, she’d tugged her sister’s face down and covered the model’s lips with *hers*.

If anything, the second kiss was even *sexier* than the first—for the simple reason that Matoi actually *moaned* when Satsuki-sama’s tongue slipped into her mouth. You’d suspected the siblings would have carried on for even longer if your girlfriend hadn’t recovered enough from her shock to scream:

“Ryuko!!! What the bloody *hell* are you doing???”

You’d watched the black-haired musician pull away a shade reluctantly, the by-now familiar glaze apparent in her half-lidded eyes. “Just getting into the role, Jakuzure-san...” she’d replied dreamily. Then with a come-hither look that had nearly all the men in the room panting, Matoi had crooked a finger at her sister and crooned, “Are you just going to stand there Soichiro-kun? Or are you...*coming*?”

Modeling was definitely much more interesting with the Kiryuin sisters around.

## ~~~~~HOOMARU REI~~~~~

“I’m impressed, Hoomaru-san. Conceiving and deploying a global marketing campaign in under 72 hours is unprecedented.”

You’d smiled, then briefly shrugged. “Given what we both used to do in our former lives, Inumuta-san, I would consider this launch child’s play. Besides, I’d never have managed the media placement without your assistance.”

“Well, I am the head of COVER Media after all. How’d you get the concept and collaterals developed so quickly though?”

“I’ve had the idea for months—I just never found an opportunity to execute it. As for the collaterals, my design team was working on the materials as the shoot was being done and we had printers all around the world on standby.”

“It’s a remarkable marketing *and* logistical feat. I have to admit though that what impresses me the most is how the photographer managed to get Matoi to pull this look off.”

“Matoi-san had some...assistance, is what I’d heard.”



The blue-haired media executive nodded wryly. “Somehow, I have an idea of what that assistance entailed.” Both of you paused for a moment to look at the visual displayed on the projector screen. Inumuta-san shook his head in admiration. “The chemistry they have together is really quite astonishing. They’re already strikingly attractive as individuals—when they’re put together, the overall effect is quite...remarkable.”

“Mmm,” you’d agreed. The image on the screen was your favorite out of all the photos taken during the shoot. It showed a blanket-clad Ryuko standing with her back to the camera, one hand clutching the folds of the coverlet to her chest while the other hand rested on Soichiro’s chest. The cloth had been draped in such a way that a long swathe of the musician’s back was exposed all the way to her hip. Soichiro, on the other hand, was dressed in a white tuxedo, one hand curving possessively over Ryuko’s rear while the other hand rested on the bared section of her back. What you loved most about the picture though was the expressions on both models’ faces: Ryuko was turned in quarter profile, her long lashes swept low and her glossy lips parted slightly; Soichiro faced the camera head on, blue eyes blazing in a look of imperious possession while a corner of his lips lifted in a sensuous smirk.

The caption underneath simply read: *Men’s COVER Fashion. Dress to undress.* All the other photos in the series conveyed a similar idea: a fully dressed Soichiro holding an ostensibly naked Ryuko in his arms.

“For all their blatant sensuality though,” the blue-haired media executive had observed, “these photos don’t actually bare too much of Ryuko’s skin.”

You’d chuckled. “Jakuzure-san would have pitched *me* off a ten-storey building if I’d gone for more exposure. As you can see though, more nakedness isn’t unnecessary. We’ve shown just enough skin to get the concept across. But even baring that much required quite a bit of negotiation with Jakuzure-san.”

Inumuta-san had only smiled. “Despite all her protestations to the contrary, Jakuzure bears much...affection for Matoi. Besides that, Matoi is her first “child” professionally speaking—and to date, the most wildly successful. So Jakuzure *would* throw people off ten-storey buildings to protect her charge—”

An insistent beep from his phone interrupted the blue-haired executive. “Speaking of the stage mother,” he’d said wryly as he pressed the answer button, “here she is now. Yes, Jakuzure? What??? That’s highly unusual...the performers are usually booked months ahead. I understand. I’ll pull something together with my team.” Then the bespectacled youth had put his phone down and looked at you with a triumphant smile on his face.

“It seems that your COVER Fashion stunt has just turned Matoi’s media snowball into an outright avalanche. Victoria’s Secret called Jakuzure ten minutes ago: they want Matoi to be their surprise performer in this year’s Fashion Show.”

It looked like your company wasn’t going to be the only fashion label ending the year with a spectacular bang after all.



*Image of Satsuki and Ryuko illustrated by artist Seven Dragons.*

## Chapter End Notes

For those of you who don't follow fashion all that much, the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show is one of THE biggest fashion events of the year. It's usually held in early December and typically features the world's leading fashion models. One of the defining characteristics of the show though is that its music is performed live by the most popular music artists of the day (with the entertainers on the same runway as the models). So, yes, Ryuko being invited as a surprise performer is a really, really BIG deal. :-D

# Anges et de Diables

## ~~~~~JAKUZURE NONON~~~~~

As much as you'd hated admitting it, the purple-haired chief of COVER Fashion had been absolutely right.

"It's settled, Jakuzure-san," your assistant had confirmed. "We're making inroads in segments we've never tapped previously with the biggest gains in the male 18- to 24-year-old segment. It looks like Matoi-san's hardcore fan base is finally expanding beyond the Lilith Fair type audience."

You'd rolled your eyes before muttering under your breath. "After three years of award-winning work, all it takes is draping her in a blanket to net the teenage boys."

"That's not the only thing you caught with *that* blanket," your boyfriend had pointed out lazily. "After all, Hoomaru's campaign did land Matoi a stint with the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show. All in all, I'd say you're ending the year quite well with the new single climbing up the charts too."

For all her recent successes though, your charge hadn't been looking particularly celebratory. If anything, Ryuko had been pensive and preoccupied in the days following the COVER Fashion shoot.

"Did you and Satsuki-chan have a fight?" You'd both been in the airport waiting for your flight to New York.

The younger Kiryuin had merely shaken her head before lapsing back into her reveries.

"Something's bothering you though."

She'd sighed before finally replying. "She can't make it to the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show. She told me she has an engagement that same night that was booked months in advance. I was hoping she'd be able to make this one—it draws such a crowd anyway that no one would have suspected anything if she'd come."

"You've seen your sister more these last several weeks than you've had in months. Shouldn't that be enough?"

The black-haired musician had propped her chin on her hand moodily. "I know. I'm not complaining. It's just that...I don't know. I always miss her. Even when she's in front of me, I miss her."

You'd both sat in silence for a moment. When you'd spoken, there was just the slightest hint of sympathy in your voice. "Being with Satsuki-chan is a burden in its own way. The gravity

she exerts on everything around her can be as destructive as a black hole's. If you're not strong enough, she'll either break your heart or crush your soul."

"Why do people keep telling me that?" your charge had muttered wryly. "Because it's true," you'd replied matter-of-factly. "After all, I've known your sister for years. At any rate, you need to get used to how things are, Ryuko. You and Satsuki-chan haven't even *begun* to scale the peaks of your careers. And now, even the demand for Soichiro-kun is getting out of hand."

"It's always going to be like this, isn't it?" the musician had asked quietly.

For a moment, you'd considered lying, then thought better of it. "No, Ryuko. If anything, it's going to get even *worse*."

She'd nodded, as if she'd known the answer in advance. "In that case," she'd whispered to herself, "there's really no point in waiting, is there?" You'd have asked her to explain what she'd meant when the airport's public address system had announced that your flight was ready for boarding.

You'd stood up and smiled at your charge. "Ready to conquer New York for the second time this year?"

Ryuko had crooked an eyebrow at you. "I'm going to do my best if that's what you mean, but I don't think I'm going to be the main attraction with the world's top models strutting around me practically naked."

"Don't worry, Ryuko," you'd smiled deviously. "Just like everything else, nakedness is a form of currency too—and I happen to be a master in spending it in the right amounts at just the right time. Now let's go."

## ~~~~~MATOI RYUKO~~~~~

You'd stood on the pitch-black runway shaking silently from the cold. Just a few minutes before you'd been scheduled to go onstage, your manager had made a sudden change to your wardrobe that you suspected she'd been planning all along—and it was the kind of change that barely suited New York on a cold December night. You were busy cursing Jakuzure when a beam of light had cut through the darkness and you'd shoved all extraneous thoughts from your head.

As the surprise performer of this year's Fashion Show, no one in the audience was expecting to see you onstage at all—and you'd been gratified by the sudden howl of delighted surprise that greeted you when the spotlight hit your face. Then the rest of the lights had beamed onto the stage, and at the full sight of your figure, the crowd had gone absolutely *wild*.

You were attired in your signature black leather pants and black leather boots, but that was as far as you'd gone where your trademark look was concerned. In a calculated concession to Victoria's Secret, Jakuzure had made you trade your usual halter top and black leather jacket for a red lace push-up bra *and* a pair of black devil's wings.

You'd never bared so much skin in a live performance before, and as your ears rang with the appreciative hoots and whistles, you suddenly understood Jakuzure's final words to you before you'd boarded the plane.

As much as you hated admitting it at times, your manager really was a genius at what she did.

"And here to perform the title song from her new album is this year's surprise performer: the sultry Matoi Ryuko!" Your hands had already begun ripping out the opening chords of the song before the emcee's voice had faded, all sense of the cold forgotten as the familiar thrill of the performance had taken over.

Behind you, the Victoria's Secret Angels had begun their walks down the runway, each model sporting her own shade of feathered wings from a rainbow's palette of hues. Not a few of them had given you a wanton look as they'd passed you on the catwalk, and you'd have blushed if you hadn't been so wrapped up in your music.

Exactly as planned, traffic on the runway began to thin as you moved into the instrumental solo that you'd arranged just for the evening's show. The folks at Victoria's Secret had told Jakuzure that they needed an interval for another surprise feature and you'd been more than happy to oblige. Your hands had begun moving in a blur over the strings of your guitar as the lights around you had started to dim.

Then a single spotlight had beamed onto the entrance to the runway, and out of curiosity more than anything else, you'd glanced up at that moment—only to have your hands nearly freeze as a vision in white had shimmered in the distance.

You had NOT expected to see *her*.

In fact, that was an understatement.

You had expected her to be somewhere *else*.

Then her words from your conversation days ago had flashed through your mind: *I can't watch your performance. I have an engagement that very same evening that's been booked for months...*

Classic Satsuki: she hadn't told you that her engagement was for the *exact* same event. Then as she'd begun to walk down the ramp, your hands had frozen entirely.

You had *never* seen her model lingerie before, and the sight she'd made in white lace-up boots, a white Chantilly lace teddy and a pair of show-white angel's wings had made your brain implode in your skull.

For a moment that stretched on to eternity, you'd completely forgotten to breathe.

And if you'd had no idea that she was appearing in the show—apparently neither did the audience. There was a moment of stunned silence before the entire hall broke out into a howl that completely obliterated the sound of your band's music.

The sultry smile she'd graced the audience with then had looked like the smile of sex personified. After a moment, you'd given up trying to play altogether—not that it mattered when the audience's yelling was threatening to bring the rafters down.

She'd sauntered down the runway slowly, a far-from-angelic smile playing on her lips. Her raven black hair had been styled in waves around her shoulders while purple eye shadow brought out the piercing blue of her eyes.

For a moment, you couldn't decide whether you wanted to ravish her or to worship her—or to be annoyed or aroused by the fact that so much of her skin was on display for the world to see.

Then she'd walked past you without a sidelong glance and pirouetted at the very front of the runway, pausing just long enough to receive the crowd's adoration and acknowledge it with a graceful bow that only made the applause escalate. Then as she'd walked back and passed you on the opposite side, she'd pivoted suddenly and stared at you long and hard, one glove-covered hand resting on a lace-covered hip. The unexpected pause caused the entire hall to quiet down, and for a heartbeat, all that could be heard was the rest of your band on instrumentals.

Then a slender hand had reached out and gripped the back of your neck—and as millions of viewers watched with bated breath live and on the screen, the world's most famous supermodel had pulled you close for a long and *torrid* kiss.

If her hand hadn't steadied you when she'd pulled away, you'd have dropped to your knees. Then she'd withdrawn her hand and walked away—but not before giving you a slow and lascivious wink.

For the n<sup>th</sup> time that evening, the crowd had gone absolutely wild.

For a moment, your vision had swum as your heart had hammered painfully in your chest. Then you'd taken a long, deep steadying breath, and spoken distinctly into the microphone:

“This solo goes out to you, Kiryuin Satsuki—for being the angel who kissed a devil tonight.”

Then with renewed confidence, you'd begun your solo again from the start.

Life was never boring with a sister like Kiryuin Satsuki around.

The look on her face when she'd seen you had been utterly and completely priceless. At the very least, it had made up for the difficulty in keeping your surprise appearance on the show a secret.

She hadn't been the only one who'd almost lost her composure though. Your mouth had nearly watered at the sight of her on stage, for she'd been the very picture of temptation herself with her upper body bare save for a crimson push-up bra and a pair of nearly floor length devil's wings.

As consummate a performer as your sister was, her hands had stilled on her guitar as you'd sauntered towards her at the front of the stage. You hadn't wanted to risk even a sidelong glance given the way she'd looked that night, but when you'd walked past her again, an impulse had made you stop and actually look her in the eye.

What you'd done next after that long and pregnant pause had surprised even you: it was illogical and irrational—and so completely in synch with what you felt.

You'd pulled her towards you and kissed her passionately. Whatever the world would eventually make of your impulsive gesture, you knew you could waive everything away later under the ruse called publicity. For once, and possibly only this once, the world's watching eye could work for the both of you instead of against you.

So you'd kissed her long and hard, allowing the desire you normally kept suppressed to come fully to the fore. You'd felt her wobble when you'd drawn back, and so you'd kept your hand behind her a fraction longer than necessary. Then as you'd walked away, you'd looked back at her and winked.

Around you, the hall had broken out in complete pandemonium. You knew your little stunt would keep Victoria's Secret in the entertainment headlines for *weeks* to come—and propel the publicity behind your sister's new album to fever pitch.

After all, few things were as taboo as a kiss between an angel and a devil, right?

## ❧❧❧-----MANKANSHOKU MAKO-----❧❧❧

It hadn't surprised you all that much when your charge had paused midway in her catwalk to cover her sister's lips in a long and torrid kiss. It was precisely the kind of moment when Satsuki-sama's logic and rationality tended to break down.

What even *you* hadn't expected was for your best friend to return the favor—possibly the result of an overly-developed and rarely-indulged sense of sibling rivalry.

As Satsuki-sama had passed her on her second catwalk for the evening, Ryuko's arm had shot out and grabbed her sister by the wrist—and with the pantherine grace she'd always shown on

the battlefield, she'd twirled Satsuki-sama around and dipped her low, one hand curling possessively around her sister's shoulder while her face hovered just a few inches above her sister's face.

Then as millions of viewers watched with bated breath live and on the screen, one of the world's most famous rock stars had covered your charge's mouth in a long and *sensuous* kiss.

Then after a moment that had stretched out to eternity, Ryuko-chan had twirled Satsuki-sama back onto her feet and given her a seductive wink before slowly releasing her hand.

"The devil always gives her due, Kiryuin Satsuki," she'd breathed into the mike, as the hall erupted in hoots and catcalls yet again.

Life could get quite unpredictable with the Kiryuin sisters around.



[Image](#) of Ryuko and Satsuki illustrated by artist [Magukappu](#).



# La Veille de Noël

~~~~~MATOI RYUKO~~~~~

You'd woken up feeling disoriented, unaccustomed after years of rising early to the luxury of sleeping in past dawn. Then you'd glanced at the figure lying next to you in bed and you'd smiled at the rare sight of Satsuki still asleep. She'd looked almost child-like as she lay upon the sheets, and you'd realized with a pang that it had been months since you'd last woken up next to her like this.

As much as you hadn't wanted to disturb her rest, you hadn't been able to resist reaching out and brushing a lock of raven hair away from her forehead, your heart aching with the agony of tenderness and desire that her presence always wrought.

It was the day before Christmas—and you both had the day free. You'd lain back and closed your eyes and spent the next several minutes debating whether to spend the day exploring the city or snuggling with your sister between the sheets.

"If you're going to keep biting your lip like that, we're never going to leave this room." You'd opened your eyes to find your sister looking at you lasciviously, a chin propped up on a slender hand. You'd smiled and pulled her down for a kiss before murmuring, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to wake you up."

She'd shaken her head. "You didn't. I'm just used to getting up early, I guess. You should try getting back to sleep though. God knows the last several days have been crazier for us than usual."

You'd raised an eyebrow at her. "Mostly because a certain supermodel decided to do a lezzy lip lock at one of the world's most heavily covered fashion events. Do you realize that I've spent more time answering the press's questions about our kiss than I have about my music???"

She'd looked at you with wide-eyed innocence. "What can I say? A certain scantily clad devil made me do it. Besides," she'd added, straddling your waist, "all the trouble really started when you decided to kiss me *back*..."

She'd leaned down then and several minutes had passed in a delightful tangle of tongues and limbs. When she'd finally pulled up for air, she'd sat up and swung her legs off the bed. "Well, if you're not sleeping in, we might as well go and see a bit of Paris during Christmas."

"Fine," you'd grouched, already missing the feel of her skin against yours, "as long we're having those flaky bread thingies and some hot chocolate first."

She'd sighed. "Can you at least learn to say the word 'croissant' before we actually leave the continent?"

You'd shrugged. "You're the linguist in the family, not me. And it doesn't hurt to call them flaky bread thingies when they really *are* flaky bread thingies."

The only response you'd received was the sound of the shower being turned on. Sitting up in bed, you'd turned the television on and started flicking through the channels—stopping when a familiar scene on an entertainment channel caught your eye.

"...Japanese supermodel Kiryuin Satsuki, who's known in the industry for her unusually conservative choice of assignments, shocked and delighted fans everywhere with a surprise appearance in this year's Victoria's Secret Fashion Show. The highlight of the evening though was her even more unexpected lip lock with fellow Japanese rock star Matoi Ryuko, who also performed for the first time in the annual event. Refusing to be outdone, Ms. Matoi returned the kiss with flair in her second performance onstage, earning a standing ovation from the audience."

When E! asked Ms. Kiryuin what led her to initiate the kiss, here's what the supermodel said:

'Participating in the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show has been on my bucket list for years—kissing Matoi Ryuko for even longer. Let's just say I couldn't resist knocking two things off my list at the same time.'

When we asked Ms. Matoi what went through her head when she was kissed by Ms. Kiryuin, here's what the rock star had to say:

'Absolutely nothing. My brain shut down the moment she leaned in and didn't restart until she was halfway down the ramp. And then it went: I've got to do that again. So I did.'

It's not the first or even the second time that female celebrities have kissed onstage. Here's E!'s recap of the hottest girl-on-girl lip action in recent years..."

"Are they still replaying that?" your sister had asked, emerging from the shower in a towel that barely concealed her thighs. It took several seconds before her question managed to sink in.

"Huh? Oh, you mean this segment? Yeah, I figure they'll be replaying it for a while yet—especially if Inumuta gets his way." You'd paused for a moment before continuing. "Actually, it's not just Inumuta. Hoomaru, Jakuzure, and even Mako-chan are milking this for all it's worth." You'd frowned briefly before turning to your sister. "Has it ever occurred to you that our friends are brazenly exploiting us?"

Satsuki had smiled at you in amusement. "I'd be disappointed if they weren't."

You'd snorted. "Why they cast *you* as the angel and *me* as the devil, I'll never understand."

"You should give your best friend more credit for protecting your best interests though," your sister had replied, rifling through the closet for clothes to wear. "In case you didn't notice, I was the only model in sleepwear while everyone else was sporting lingerie."

"That got you to cover, what, two more inches of flesh?"

“Two inches is two acres in my line of work.”

“Fine. I’ll send Mako-chan the same Chantilly lace teddy as a Christmas present.”

“That might knock Gamagori out all the way until New Year’s Day.”

“Poor Mako-chan. You really should give her a hand. Gamagori does everything you say—maybe you could ask him to stay conscious on their next date.”

“Gamagori interacts with me on a purely professional basis. I wouldn’t want to cross any personal lines.”

“Speaking of professional-to-personal line-crossers, I wonder how Renarde-san took the Fashion Show’s events.”

“From what Gamagori told me, she sounds...freshly motivated—something about confirming you as a batter for the same team.”

You’d rolled your eyes in exasperation. “That woman is incorrigible!”

“Oh?” Your sister had lifted a corner of her mouth. “I think you’re just irresistible.”

You’d waggled your eyebrows at her suggestively. “In that case, why don’t you...*irresist* me?”

“Your innovative use of language astounds me sometimes.”

“My innovative use of my mouth, in general, astounds you *every* time.”

“Do try to pull your head out of the gutter, little sister.”

“Only if I get to put it between your legs—which, I have to say, is an incredibly *irresistible* prospect when you’re bending over like that.”

She’d given up trying to get dressed then and laughed. “You. Are. Incorrigible.” Then she’d walked back to the bed and dropped her towel to the floor, exposing her body in a way that made your brain implode in your skull. “Now, why don’t you put that mouth of yours to innovative use and, hmm, *astound* me for the next twenty minutes?”

Half an hour later, your sister had lain sprawled on top of you while you’d lain panting on the sheets. “Okay,” you’d gasped weakly. “I could really use a dozen flaky bread thingies and a gallon of hot chocolate now.”

“I do repeatedly warn you to be careful what you ask for,” your sister had replied, looking down at you in amusement. “Now, we’ve really *got* to get going. There are a few places I’d like us to see.”

You’d watched her roll off the bed gracefully, and with as much casualness as you could, you’d asked. “You didn’t...pack the day with too many plans, did you?”

She'd glanced at you with a puzzled look. "Not really... Was there something in particular that you had in mind?"

"No!" you'd answered a little too quickly, then forced yourself to sound calm. "I...I just thought it would be nice if we got back early enough to decorate a tree. I mean, no matter how busy things got every year, we always managed to do that every Christmas."

"You're right," she'd replied, a soft smile lighting up her face. "I'll ask Soroi to have a tree brought in while we're out."

"Cool! You can put the star on it this year since I did it last year."

Your sister had frowned briefly. "Really? I was pretty sure I did it last year—"

"Oh, would you look at the time?" you'd quickly interrupted before sprinting out of bed. "We should be going *now*."

Your sister had stood shaking her head as you'd zipped around the bedroom. "That's what I've been saying for the last half hour! Sometimes, Ryuko, you're just really...strange."

"Well," you'd replied cheerfully as you stepped into the bathroom, "that's what you get when you cross a baby with a ball of alien yarn. I'll be out in five minutes!"

In the privacy of the shower, you'd taken a long, deep breath. It was going to be a long day. And, hopefully, a good one.

~~~~~KIRYUIN SATSUKI~~~~~

You'd started your explorations at the banks of the Seine and made your way northwards from the heart of Paris, winding through the *arrondissements* of Marais and Canal St. Martin before ending at the streets of Montmartre. You'd deliberately stayed away from the western parts of the city where the Arc de Triomphe, the Champs-Élysées and the Tour Eiffel were located, unwilling to risk having your sister identified by the swarms of American and Asian tourists.

"Why do I get the feeling that you know Paris like the back of your hand?" It was late in the afternoon and you were both looking at the city from the vantage point of the Sacré-Cœur. Ryuko was leaning on the railing next to you, her cheeks flushed from the long trek up the hill.

You'd paused briefly before replying. "I spent a number of summers here when I was growing up. Our mother always was...fond of France."

You'd caught the wince that ghosted across Ryuko's face. "Urgh. I'm sorry. I should have realized—"

“There’s no need to apologize. That’s why I wanted to do this with you, actually. Walking these streets with you is my way of reclaiming Paris for myself; of replacing...old memories with new. I’m sorry for being self—“

She’d cut you off by wrapping her arms around your waist. “Don’t apologize. Not when you’re making me all...warm and fuzzy like this.”

You’d leaned back into her embrace. “Thank you,” you’d said softly, indulging the weakness that made you wish the moment could last forever. It had been a perfect day in *so* many ways. Freed from the risk of recognition, you and Ryuko had indulged in the unconscious and inconsequential gestures that passed between lovers in the public sphere: leaning into each other, holding hands, giving each other chaste pecks on the forehead and cheek. You were on the verge of regretting all the hiding of the past three years when your sister had interrupted your thoughts.

“Why’d you do it?”

“Do what?” you’d asked, shifting slightly in her embrace so you could look her in the face.

She’d kissed the tip of your nose before answering. “You know, kiss me. At the Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show. We’ve been so careful all this time—you pulling a stunt like that was a little, hmm, *wild*.”

You’d paused for a moment before replying, your voice quieter than usual. “You’re the only one who can make me do things like that, you know?”

“You’re dodging my question with a question,” she’d pointed out smiling.

You’d chuckled. “Fine, fine.” You’d paused again to gather your thoughts. “I guess I’ve always wanted to tell the world you’re mine—tell people that the beautiful, gorgeous, sexy and talented musician that they adore belongs to me and me alone. But I...can’t. At least not now. So I guess when I’m given an excuse—whether it’s at the COVER Fashion shoot or at the Victoria’s Secret Fashion Show—I...give in.” You’d hesitated briefly, then continued. “I’m sorry, Ryuko. I’ve been really selfish lately, haven’t I?”

She’d buried her face in your shoulder and you just managed to see the tinge of pink in her ears. “Don’t...don’t apologize,” she’d replied, her voice muffled by your scarf. “Not when you’re giving me the warm and fuzzies again.”

When she’d finally brought her face up, you’d asked: “Should we start heading back to the hotel now? We’ll have just enough time for a light dinner then we can spend the rest of the evening putting up the tree.”

“Sounds good,” she’d smiled. “Could we have that goose liver spread on those foot-long bread thingies?”

“Oh, for crying out loud, even *you* can pronounce ‘fois gras’ and ‘baguette’...”

Both of you nearly forgot about dinner though when you finally beheld the tree that Soroi had brought in.

“Good Lord,” Ryuko had exclaimed. “Did he cross a fir tree with a sequoia??? That thing looks like a leafy version of the Tour Eiffel!”

You’d gazed up at the arboreal monstrosity that your butler had brought in. “Looks like we’re in for a long night. I just hope we’ve got enough lights to go around this thing.”

“And I just hope we *don’t* blow a fuse turning on the lights that are going to go around this thing.”

“Well, staring at it isn’t going to accessorize it. Let’s get going, little sister.”

Ryuko’s occasional grumbling aside, you’d both had a lot of fun decorating the massive tree. Since Soroi had already chosen the ornaments, there was little left to do apart from actually putting them on.

“We’re nearly done,” you’d called out as you’d climbed to the top of the ladder that your butler had also brought in. “Could you hand me the star, Ryuko?”

“Hang on,” you’d heard her rummaging briefly before slipping an object into your outstretched hand.

You’d been about to attach the final ornament to the top of the tree when you realized that what you held in your hand was a distinctly un-star-like...*box*.

For a moment that stretched on to eternity, you’d completely forgotten to breathe.

Then your world had gone inexplicably blurry and dark and weightless and unmoored...

“Satsuki! Watch out—!”

Everything had briefly wobbled and spun and tumbled and flipped, and by the time things had finally righted themselves, you’d found yourself in your sister’s arms gazing into a pair of worried blue eyes.

“You’ve never lost your balance before,” you’d heard her anxiety in the unsteadiness of her voice.

“I’ve never been proposed to before,” you’d felt your shock in the calm of yours.

“Well,” your sister had chuckled, a blush suffusing her cheeks. “At least this evens the score a bit: 2-1 in our three-year-long catch-your-falling-sister contest.”

“Did you really have to propose while I was standing on a ladder???”

“Did your butler really have to get us a ten-foot tall tree?”

“Seriously, we walked through some of the most romantic places in Paris today and *this* had to be the moment?”

“Look at the bright side: things could have been much, *much* worse if I’d done this by the Seine.”

“Or at the top of the Sacré-Cœur ...” At this point, neither of you could suppress the uncharacteristic giggles that were shaking your bodies in a decidedly unromantic fashion.

“Kidding aside,” you’d chuckled, after several minutes of laughter had elapsed. “This didn’t turn out all that badly, actually, given your track record for these kinds of things.”

“Glad to hear your glowing assessment of it,” your sister had replied wryly, “given that I have it all on video.” She’d promptly crawled over to the side table where she’d apparently propped her phone and crawled back to you to replay the footage.

After you’d watched it together twice, giggling all the while, she’d spoken out loud: “You know what? If we remove the sound and that bit where you fall off the ladder like a drunken penguin, it actually reminds me of the first time we met. There’s you up high looking down at me. There’s me down below trying to ask you a question. All that’s missing is that ridiculous halo behind your back.”

You’d smiled nostalgically. “You used to hate it when I did that, you know.”

She’d smiled back at you. “I used to hate a lot of things.”

“I can’t believe it’s been three years.”

“Care to make it, I don’t know, three hundred years more?”

“*Just* three hundred? What happened to forever?”

“I didn’t want to press my luck.”

You’d paused for a moment before replying: “I want to hear you say it.”

She’d promptly blushed all the way to the tips of her ears.

“Say it for me, Ryuko,” you’d asked softly.

She’d taken a deep breath. “Alright. Let’s do this properly then.” She’d pried the box gently away from your fingers then got down on one knee. There was just the faintest tremor in her hands when she finally opened the case and revealed the ring that lay inside. You’d gasped at the sight of the enormous stone.

“Satsuki...” she’d spoken softly, her deep blue eyes uncharacteristically bright, “will you marry me?”

For a moment that stretched on to eternity, you couldn’t speak, couldn’t think, couldn’t even breathe for the massive constriction in your throat and chest. “Ask me one more time,” you’d

finally whispered, your azure eyes shining.

She'd shaken her head and smiled. "Fine. Will you be mine, Kiryuin Satsuki, for the rest of my life and yours?"

You'd answered by throwing yourself into her arms and covering her face with a flurry of breathless and tender kisses.

"Yes, yes, yes!" you'd nearly sobbed. "And just for the record: I was yours long before you asked."

"You could have said," she'd answered, her eyes still the slightest bit too bright. "Though I'm still really glad I asked." Then she'd caught your hand and gently slid the ring onto your finger.

"It's...beautiful," you'd murmured, your voice hitching just the tiniest bit. "How long have you been planning this???"

She'd smiled. "Long enough to rehearse asking the question. I swear, the first dozen times I tried it, it came out as a squeak."

"But why...now?"

She'd sighed. "Honestly, I was going to wait for a time when things weren't so crazy for us at work. But after the last few weeks, I don't think that's going to happen for a really, really long while. So I thought, why bother waiting?"

Your face had clouded over briefly. "Speaking of work, you know I can't wear this in pub—"

She'd cut you off by pulling a silver chain out of the bottom of the box. "Yeah, I figured. Which is why your ring's going to moonlight as a necklace most of the time."

You'd taken her face in your hands and kissed her deeply. "That pragmatic streak of yours does rear up at the strangest times, Ryuko." Then you'd sat back and smiled at her. "I don't think my Christmas present is going to top yours, so you'll have to tell me what else you want."

She'd looked up at you then, her azure eyes glowing with that combination of love, reverence, tenderness and desire that made you weak in the knees every single time. "Wear my ring tonight—and nothing else," she'd murmured, "and I'll consider it even."

"That's not asking for much," you'd murmured back as you pressed her down into the carpet, your other hand already unfastening the buttons of your shirt.

"Well, I've been told—rather repeatedly—to be careful what I ask for," she'd replied, sounding just the slightest bit breathless.

"Good girl," you'd murmured, as your shirt slithered off your shoulders. "Now, *me* being naughty is *your* reward for being nice..."

Neither of you managed to get the star up the Christmas tree that year.



[Image](#) of Ryuko and Satsuki illustrated by artist [Nightkun](#).

Lendemain

~~~~~MATOI RYUKO~~~~~

You'd woken up feeling disoriented, unaccustomed after years of rising early to the luxury of sleeping in past dawn. Then you'd glanced at the figure lying next to you in on the floor and you'd smiled at the rare sight of Satsuki still asleep. She would have looked child-like enough lying on the sheets—except for the fact that there was nothing childish at all about her gloriously displayed curves.

Your last memory before falling asleep was of your sister shuddering underneath you, your name a breathless litany on her lips. A thrill had run through you at the realization that you had a lifetime ahead of falling asleep and waking up next to your sister like this.

You'd watched as she'd opened her eyes slowly, the long thick lashes sweeping upwards to reveal blue eyes the exact same shade as yours.

You'd smiled at her in greeting. "Good morning, beautiful," you'd murmured, "Fancy finding you all unwrapped underneath my tree."

"Merry Christmas to you too," she'd smiled back before drawing you close and wrapping her incredibly long limbs around your frame. "Want to start opening your gifts?"

"Maybe later..." you'd murmured, your lips busy traversing the delicate lines of her collar bone. "I'm not quite done opening last night's *gift*..." She'd gasped as your fingers slipped between her legs. "You. Are. Insatiable..." she'd moaned.

"Not at all," you'd smiled before taking a brief...lick. "You're just irresistible."

"As lovely as all this is," your sister had panted as she'd rocked involuntarily against your face, "I need you to...resist me now, Ryuko..."

"Whatever for?" you'd murmured, lifting your head just enough to get the words out.

"Because we're hosting Christmas brunch this morning...and I'd rather not have my friends walk in and find you...*eating* ahead."

You'd grinned wickedly before resuming your ministrations with renewed fervor. "Good thing I'm a quick eater then."

"That is so *not* French," your sister had protested, "You should really make an effort to go with the local culture, Ryu—ooooooooohhhh..."

She hadn't managed to voice any other objections after that, and despite all her exhortations to hurry, she hadn't been able to resist taking you in the shower (a concession to what you'd

supposed was an overly-developed and rarely-indulged sense of sibling rivalry).

“This *can't* be safe,” you’d panted with your face pressed against the glass and your moans reverberating against the tiles. “It’s slippery as *hell*, Satsuki...”

“Tell me about it,” your sister had replied wickedly, an extra finger slipping in for good measure.

“That is *not*...what I meant,” you’d answered weakly. “We could...ohhhhh God...don’t stop doing that...slip on these tiles...”

“Hmm...having you flat on your back wouldn’t be *all* that disadvantageous, actually... Besides, you’re one to talk after proposing to me while I was on a ladder.”

“I’m never going to hear that end of that, will I?”

“You will, once I’ve used it against you enough times. Now do stay still, little sister. If this takes any longer, we’re going to look like prunes...”

And that was why you were still in the middle of tying the laces of your brogues when the doorbell rang.

“Will you get that, Ryuko?” your sister had asked. You’d made the mistake of looking at her to say yes only to find her bent over in a towel that probably moonlighted as a handkerchief.

“Good grief,” you’d muttered, averting your eyes. “Could you *not* do that?”

“Do what?” Satsuki had asked innocently while swiveling her hips in a way that gave you an unrivaled view of her posterior.

“Honestly,” you’d muttered, stomping out of the bedroom. “Why people think *you’re* the angel and *I’m* the devil in this relationship is beyond me.” You’d opened the door to find Jakuzure, Sanageyama and Inumuta outside laden with gifts.

“What happened to you??” you’d asked with some concern, gesturing at the eye bags that revealed themselves when Jakuzure removed her sunglasses.

“Some sex-starved Santa on the floor above my room and Uzu’s decided to climb up and down his girlfriend’s chimney all night,” your manager had fumed. “And by the sound of it, the pervs had a Taser of some kind. The whole thing sounded like electric eels in a mating frenzy.”

“Your metaphors are as colorful as ever, Nonon,” your sister had replied, emerging from your bedroom in a white shirt dress and blue ballet flats. It never failed to amaze you how your sister could look so...stunning in clothes that were otherwise so simple. “Why don’t we give you a hand with all those gifts?”

You were helping Sanageyama and Inumuta arrange their presents under the Christmas tree when a shriek caused all three of you to whirl around.

“What the *fuck* is *that*???” Jakuzure had yelled, pointing with a trembling finger at your sister’s hand.

“I believe it’s a ring, Nonon,” your sister had replied calmly, though a crimson blush had colored her cheeks.

“I bloody well *know* it’s a bloody ring, but what’s it doing on your hand???”

“Given the cut of the stone and the finger on which it’s being worn,” Inumuta had drawled, “I believe its function is to signify that Satsuki-sama is...engaged.”

“I bloody well *know* it means that she’s bloody engaged, but what business does she have being engaged???” As soon as she’d spat out the question, she’d swiveled around and shot a look of such unremitting hostility at Sanageyama that all of you had involuntarily stepped back.

Sanageyama, in turn, had shot you a baleful look, his expression clearly conveying the message: *Gee, thanks Matoi. Now I’m never going to hear the end of it.*

“What’s all the fuss about?”

You’d turned around to find your best friend hobbling into the room with a walker, a smile of almost deranged proportions on her face. Her boyfriend had trailed behind her with a bagful of gifts and about a dozen sticker plasters on his jaw and neck, wearing an almost smothering aura of...smugness.

“Your *charge*,” Jakuzure had replied caustically, “is *engaged*.”

At the sight of Satsuki, your best friend’s eyes had widened—then she’d promptly thrown herself at your sister’s feet, making repeated gestures of obeisance.

“Satsuki-sama,” she’d fervently intoned as she’d bobbed her head up and down in several low bows, “truly your foresight, understanding and wisdom know no bounds. My gratitude, loyalty and obedience are yours until the end of my days. Even the fruits of my womb shall be yours—”

“That will be unnecessary, Mankanshoku-san,” your sister had hurriedly interrupted, “a simple thank you will suffice.”

By this point, Gamagori had picked his girlfriend up from the floor and reattached her to her walker—offering a solemn ‘thank you’ and ‘congratulations’ to your sister in the process.

“What was that about?” you’d whispered in your sister’s ear.

“Let’s just say I gave Mankanshoku-san a hand without crossing any of Gamagori’s personal lines,” Satsuki had replied cryptically.

“What’s this I’m hearing about Satsuki-sama being engaged?” Hoomaru had asked as she’d stepped into the room with a crate of presents. “Really, Ryuko-san, I didn’t think you were

the type. And even if I'd thought that you were the type, I wouldn't have thought that you could pull it off."

"It was all rather sweet, actually," your sister had replied mildly—before blushing furiously at the realization that she'd absentmindedly come to your defense.

"Yup," you'd chimed in quickly to spare Satsuki any further embarrassment. "Went through the whole thing with hardly any hitches."

"That's not what it shows here," Inumuta had called out, holding up your phone. "Did you really have to propose while your sister was on a ladder, Matoi-san?"

"That was unforgivably reckless, Matoi," Gamagori had rumbled disapprovingly. "Next time, kindly clear all initiatives involving Satsuki-sama with me."

"Good save though," Sanageyama had nodded, reviewing the footage one more time.

"What in the blue blazes are you idiots doing with my phone!" you'd screamed.

"I still can't believe Satsuki-chan got engaged before *me*!" Jakuzure had wailed.

"Oh for God's sake, will all of you settle down???" your sister had yelled.

There was a moment of absolute silence. Then Iori had stepped in, staggering under an armful of gifts.

"Sorry I'm late," he'd wheezed. Then looking at the flushed faces all around the room, he'd asked uncertainly: "Did I miss something?"

"Nothing I can't explain later, Iori-san," Hoomaru-san had cheerfully replied. Then giving you a wink, the purple-haired fashion executive had added, "We'll need to talk business tomorrow though. It looks like our plans to get into wedding couture will have to proceed much earlier than anticipated..."

Christmas was definitely more interesting with your sister's minions around.



*[Image](#) of the Kill la Kill cast illustrated by artist [Hatutaro](#).*



# Épilogue

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

### ~~~~~CHAPTER 23 *OMAKE*: MANKANSHOKU MAKO~~~~~

“Okay, Gamagori-senpai, you can open your eyes now.”

You’d watched your boyfriend’s eyes widen to near comic proportions as he beheld you in your Chantilly-lace-covered glory. You hadn’t been sure whether a Santa hat went better with all the white or if reindeer antlers made a better fit, so you’d decided to wear both instead.

The nightie had been a present from your best friend—sent that very same evening courtesy of Soroi. Satsuki-sama had sent a gift as well; the card on the box had simply read: “Use this with Ryuko’s present, Mankanshoku-san.”

You’d watched your boyfriend’s jaw work itself furiously as he realized how little you had on—an internal battle of epic proportions playing itself out in the contortions of his face.

“Mankanshoku,” he’d wheezed, “how can you expect me... to act like an honorable man...in the face of such blatant temptation???”

“Gamagori-senpai,” you’d purred, “Oscar Wilde once said that the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it.” Then you’d advanced on him slowly, backing him inch by inch into a wall so he could retreat no further.

“Now,” you’d quirked an eyebrow at him lasciviously, “look up, Gamagori-senpai.”

Your boyfriend’s eyes had widened ridiculously for the second time that evening when he beheld what you’d done to the ceiling. You’d been determined to have all your bases covered (with the intention of having them overrun later, of course) and hence you’d stuck sprigs of mistletoe over every bare inch of space.

“Now,” you’d dropped your voice into what you’d hoped was a sultry whisper, “you’ll *have* to kiss me, Gamagori-senpai.”

As you’d sashayed towards the giant, you’d watched his eyelids droop and his shoulders slump in the telltale signs of an impending faint. In a flash, your coyness had evaporated in the heat of rage.

“OH NO YOU DON’T GAMAGORI-SENPAI!” you’d yelled, your reindeer antlers bristling. “Thanks to YOU, I’ve been good all BLOODY year and I’VE HAD IT with playing nice! I want my Christmas present and I want it NOW!”

With that, you’d brought up the present that Satsuki-sama had given you—and squeezed the trigger of the Taser with the nozzle against your boyfriend’s chest.

“GAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!” he’d woken up with a roar, his body rigid from the electrical shock. You’d exploited the moment it took for him to recover to insinuate yourself onto his lap.

You’d tapped the nozzle of the stun gun against your boyfriend’s ribs, your voice an uncharacteristic blend of seduction and steel. “You’ve been a bad boy fainting on me all this time, Gamagori-senpai. It’s high time you got your punishment—”

You’d almost leapt back in alarm when an unholy fire lit your boyfriend’s eyes. “Punishment? Punishment??? Yes. Yes! YESSS!!! That’s right, Mankanshoku...” your boyfriend had intoned commandingly. “Beat me! Whip me! Flagellate me for my failure to pleasure you as I should!!!”

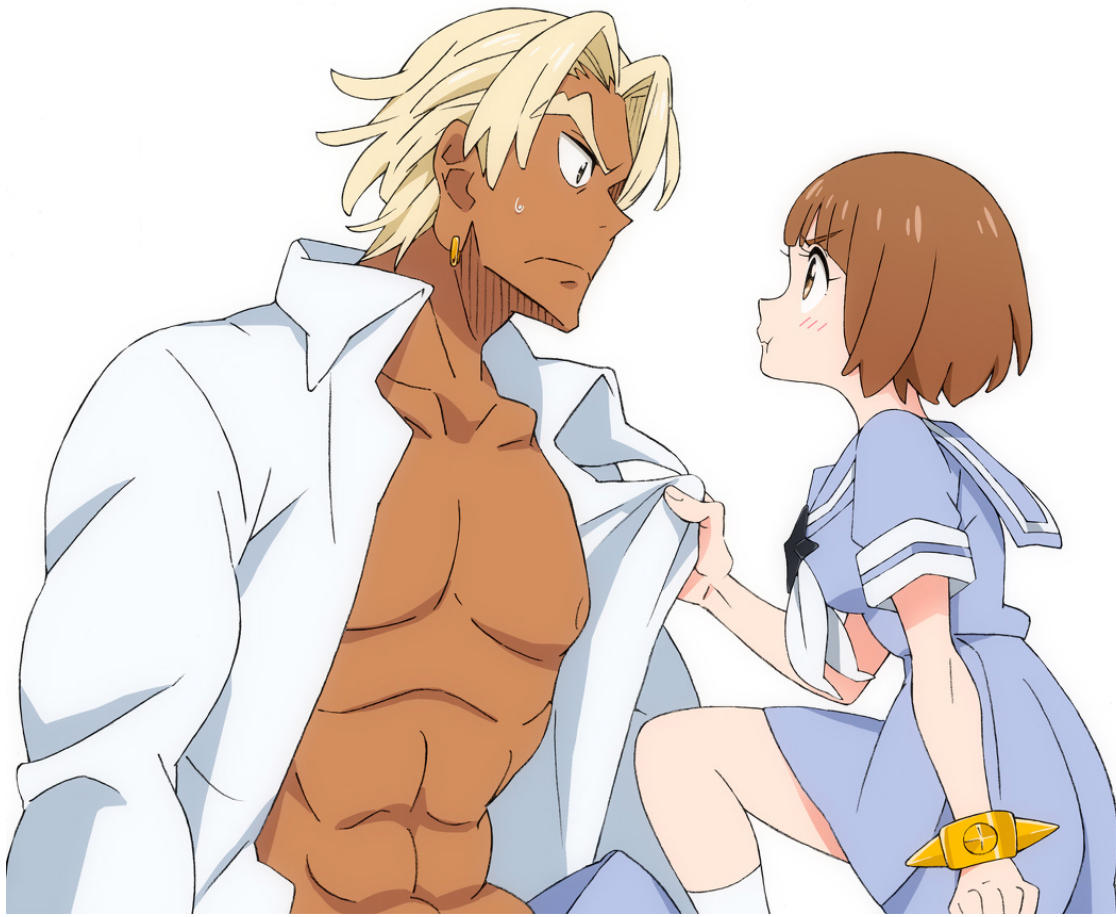
You’d managed to squeeze the trigger one more time—this time in self-defense—only to watch how the electric shock inflamed your boyfriend’s suddenly-incited passion to even more dangerous heights.

“Oh, *fuck*,” you’d breathed, as your boyfriend had towered massively above you, an unfamiliar glint in the steel-gray eyes.

“*Fuck*, indeed, is what we’re going to do, Mankanshoku,” the giant had rumbled with a diabolical smile.

It had occurred to you then (in the brief moment that thought still occurred) that you *might* have bitten off more than you could chew.





*Image of Gamagori and Mako illustrated by artist Mako.*

## ~~~~~CHAPTER 24 OMAKE: INUMUTA HOUKA~~~~~

Things had settled down reasonably enough in the Kiryuin penthouse after brunch. A suspiciously ebullient Gamagori had cajoled a sleep-starved Sanageyama into several rounds of mixed martial arts on the Wii. Judging from the shouts and curses coming from the living room, you'd surmised it was only a matter of time before both men escalated the game into a real fight.

In the meanwhile, an excited Hoomaru had cornered a blushing Satsuki-sama with a sketch pad with the intention of narrowing down some "possible wedding dress designs." You'd doubted both women would achieve much, however, with Jakuzure's voluble and unsolicited commentary.

You and Iori, on the other hand, had settled at the dining table to review the research results from the Madison Square Garden concert, while Matoi and Mankanshoku had retreated to the kitchen to wash the dishes.

Iori had been in the middle of comparing several graphs on his laptop screen when you'd heard Mankanshoku's voice float through the open door that led to the dining room.

"...oh my God, Ryuko-chan, you should have seen it. It was THIS big..."

The blonde couturier next to you had faltered in the middle of his explanation. "Um, as I was saying..." he'd stammered after a moment—

"...I swear: I'd NEVER had my mouth crammed THAT full before..."

Iori had swallowed, then bravely continued: "So as you can see, Inumuta—"

"...for something so meaty, it went down smoothly enough..."

Iori's face had flushed all the way to the tips of his ears. "If you look at the charts, you can see the correlation here and *here*—"

"...just midway through, I felt I was going to split *apart*..."

Iori's fingers had trembled as he'd clicked the mouse over another chart. "Now if you look at this instead—"

"...it was *sooo* good, Ryuko-chan. I was practically begging for more and *more*..."

Iori had begun to sweat. "The findings are consistent with what Hoomaru-san has, er, observed in other instances..."

Then Matoi's voice had floated through the door.

"...I can't believe what I missed! You should totally let me try it sometime, Mako ..."

You'd felt a stab of pity at the look of horrified shock on the blonde couturier's face at that point.

"Iori," you'd spoken with gentle amusement, "You do realize that Mankanshoku is telling Matoi about the jumbo croquettes her mother served for Christmas Eve dinner last year, right?"

"Croquettes?" the researcher had squeaked.

"Yes," you'd replied placidly. "Matoi and Jakuzure missed the dinner last year because of a Christmas benefit concert that COVER Music was doing. You and Hoomaru were out as well, I believe."

"Croquettes?" the researcher had re-confirmed.

"Yes," you'd replied patiently. "They really *were* that big and they really *were* that meaty."

"Croquettes..." the researcher had whispered. "I don't think I'll ever be able to eat the things again for the rest of my life..."

You'd patted him consolingly on the back. Christmas was definitely more interesting with Mato's minion around.



*[Image](#) of Ryuko, Satsuki and the rest of the Kill la Kill gang illustrated by artist [Person](#).*

## Chapter End Notes

So after years of crossing my fingers that I'd get to finish this piece *someday*, I finally decided to mark the story as "complete." While I readily admit that the narrative ended on an abrupt note, I realized that all the intentions that had compelled me to write this series in the first place had been fulfilled the moment Satsuki and Ryuko got engaged :-). While the narrative itself feels "unfinished" (because it IS technically unfinished), I hope the fact that it ended with a major relationship milestone will be closure enough for those of you who followed this story years ago.

At any rate, regardless of how things turned out, I hope you've all found this piece as enjoyable to read as it's been enjoyable for me to write ;-). It's truly, TRULY been a blast...and I thank you all for your engagement and support :-D Be happy and well, ya'll! ヽ('▽` ;)

P.S. As a thank you gift of sorts, I embedded fan art in all of the chapters of the two stories that make up this series :-). So if you'd like to revisit both stories just to check out the art, I highly encourage it! X-D

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!